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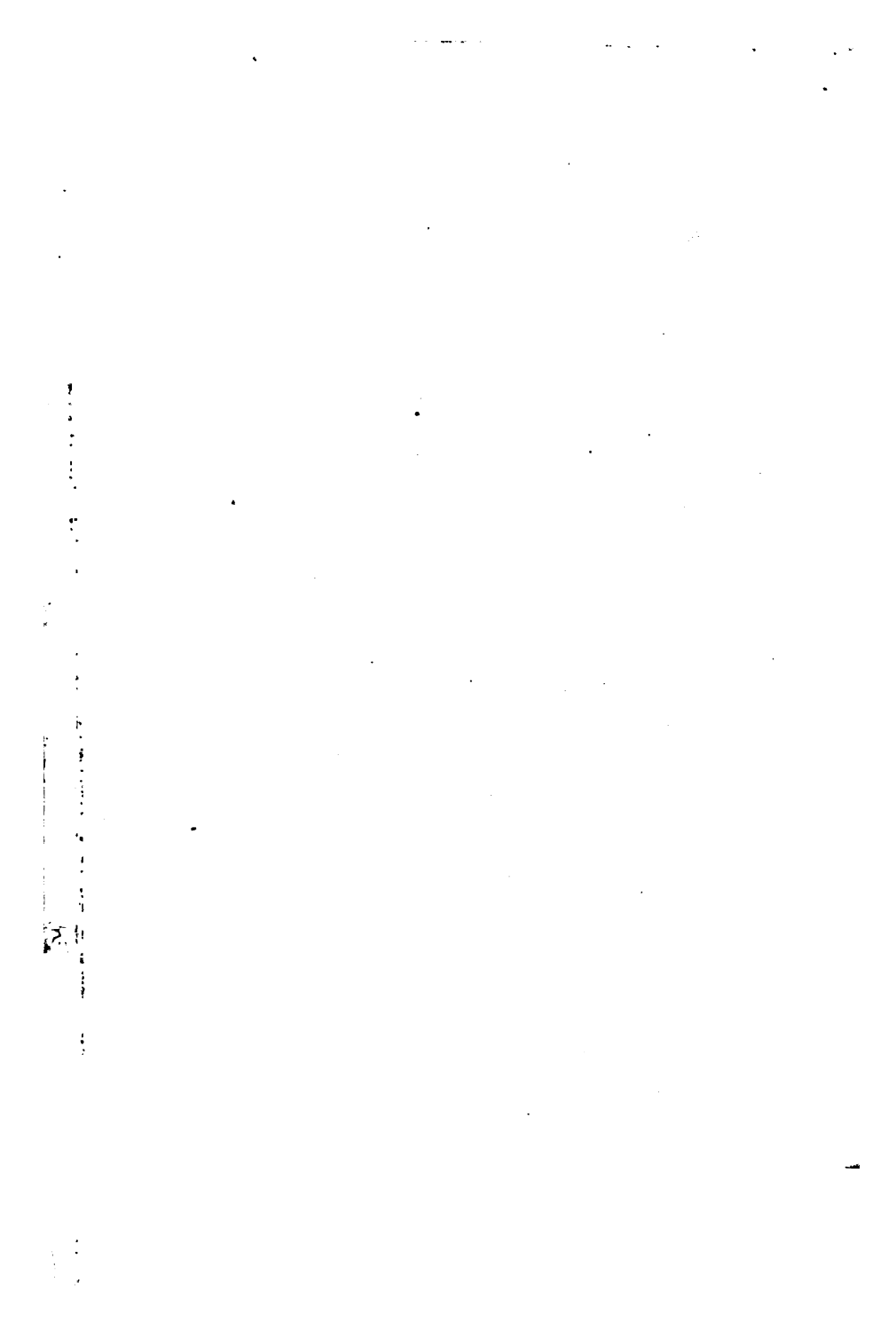
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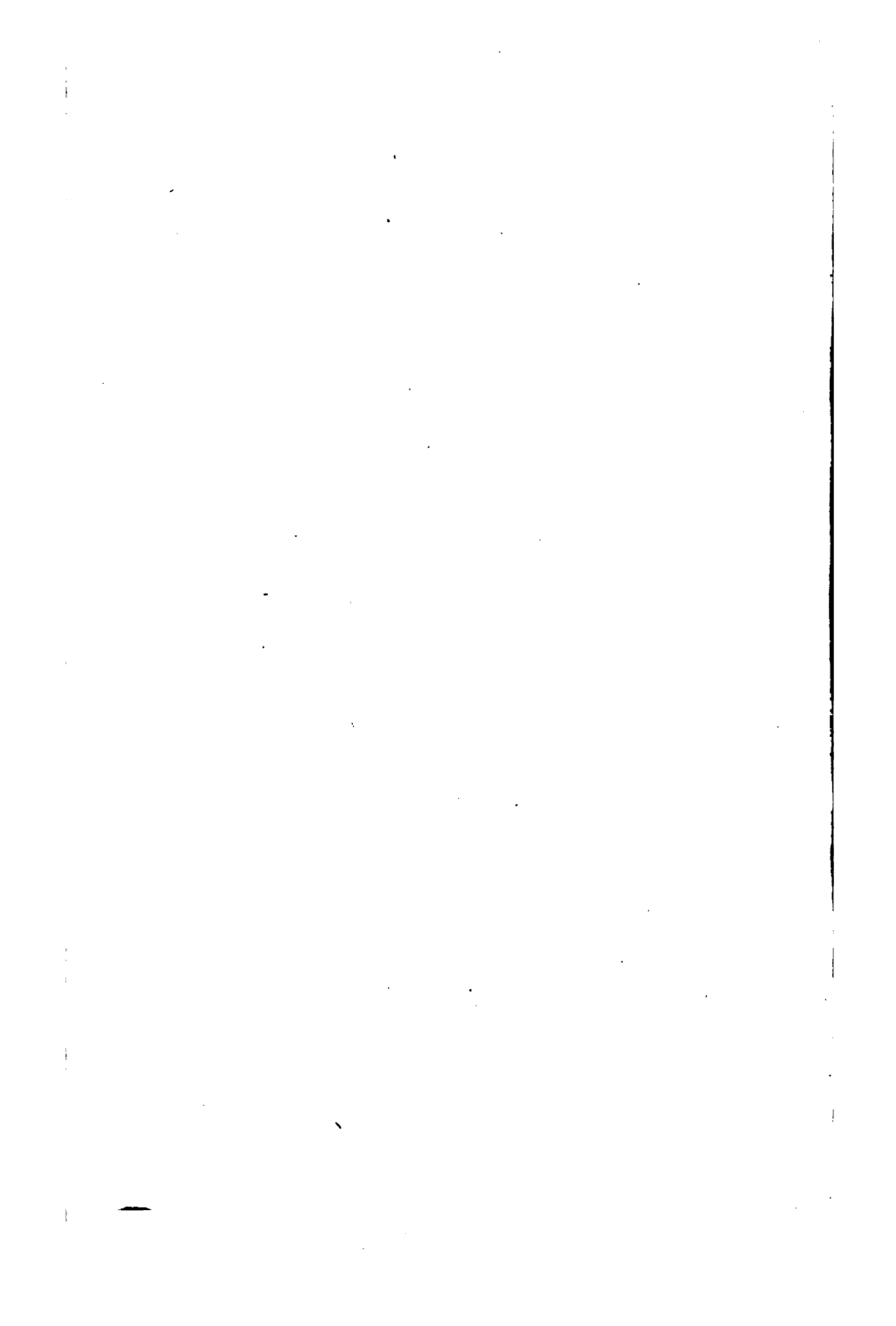
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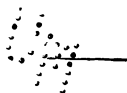
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MR. AND MRS. MORTON

A NOVEL



FOURTH EDITION.

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MR. AND MRS. MORTON.

CHAPTER I.

DURING the latter part of the month of June, 187-, a young lawyer, Henry Morton by name, was sitting in his office, in Boston, reading a letter.

On the table in front of him lay a United States passport, which set forth with great precision, how Henry Morton, a citizen of the United States, twenty-eight years of age, was to be recognized by the following description: stature, six feet; forehead, high; eyes, dark; nose, regular; mouth, ditto; face, oval; black moustache.

This description of the hero of our story certainly has the great merit of being concise; but it fails to give the reader a correct idea of the singular beauty of the face it attempts to portray; a face, remarkable not only for the regularity of its features, but also for the great beauty of its expression. It was a face in which power and passion were strangely blended, and which would tempt even the most casual spectator to a second

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look. But still it was not a countenance whose beauty could set adverse criticism at defiance. A close observer might have said that the cheek-bones were too prominent, that the mouth was too large, and the lips too full; and if the observer had been an expert in the study of the human expression, he would have noticed that in moments of great excitement, there was a peculiar contraction of those muscles which anatomists call the "levator labii superioris alaeque nasi," which had an unusual effect of flattening the nose, and of giving a dangerous look of ferocity to the mouth.

Then, too, the face was thinner than perfect beauty would have required, having that thinness which betokens intensity of the feelings; for fat is no less surely consumed by the scorching fire of the passions, than it is by that more unromantic, but perhaps equally pleasure-giving flame, which burns so peacefully in the kitchen range.

These characteristics, however, were by no means obtrusive, and the ordinary observer would simply have been struck by the singular air of energy and self-control, which was remarkable when the face was in repose. Morton was a graduate of Harvard University; he had studied law in an office in Boston, but had been admitted to the bar after studying considerably less than the prescribed time. During the six years previous to the opening of our story he had been steadily

gaining ground in the practice of his profession, so that when the reader makes his acquaintance he was considered one of the most promising of the younger lawyers.

The letter which Morton was reading ran as follows: —

PARKER HOUSE, June 20, 187—.

HENRY MORTON, Esq.,

Dear Sir: — I wrote you last week, in answer to your letter of June 6, to say that I would come on to Boston and see you personally. I arrived here last night. As my time is short, I shall call at your office at 10 A. M., at which hour I shall hope to find you alone. Very sincerely yours,

JAMES HAMILTON.

Morton read this letter carefully through twice. Then, looking at his watch, he called to the boy who was sitting in the outer office.

“Frank,” said he, as the boy came into the room, “I expect a gentleman this morning, and I do not want to be disturbed under any circumstances. If Doctor Lindsley calls, tell him that I am very busy, but that I will come up to the hospital this evening.”

The boy replied with a respectful “Yes, sir,” and left the room, while Morton turned to his other letters. He had been engaged in reading and answering these a half hour or more when an elderly gentleman entered the office and asked

for Mr. Morton. The new comer was a tall, stately man, dressed after the manner of a clergyman of the Episcopal church, and had that benignant air which is so seldom seen, but which always invites confidence and respect. "I am Mr. Morton," said the lawyer, rising from his chair, and going forward to meet his visitor. "You, I presume, are Mr. Hamilton, from whom I received a letter this morning?" "That is my name, sir," replied the clergyman, looking at Morton narrowly; "I have come on from Washington hoping that a personal interview with you may settle this matter, once and for all." Morton shook hands with his visitor and motioned him to a seat. Then, while the clergyman was drawing up a chair for himself, he closed the door and locked it, having first reiterated to the boy his previous injunctions. Then he returned deliberately to his desk, and drawing himself up to his full height, in front of his visitor, he looked the latter squarely in the face, and said, in a somewhat defiant tone:—

"Mr. Hamilton, with your permission, we will begin the business of our interview at once, and," said he, seeing that the clergyman was about to reply, "I shall also ask your permission to be allowed to present the matter before us, in my own way."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Hamilton, who in the meantime had been examining Morton with an odd

mixture of surprise and admiration in his countenance. "Our interview is of your seeking. You shall conduct it as you see fit."

"My earliest recollections," resumed Morton, "carry me back to the time when I was taken care of by a certain Mrs. West, in Newton. Before that time I can remember nothing. I simply know that she took charge of me as an infant, in the capacity of nurse. From Mrs. West's I was sent to Phillips Academy, by your direction; and from Exeter to Cambridge, by the same authority. Before I went to Cambridge all my expenses were paid through you. After I had entered college I received, through you, an allowance of five hundred dollars, which I supplemented by a scholarship, and by teaching. On becoming twenty-one years of age, I received, again through your agency, the sum of ten thousand dollars with the statement that I need never expect anything more from the same source, unless I should be in actual want. You have also given me advice from time to time when I have asked for it.

"This substantially is what you have done for me. Now on the other hand, although you have always answered my letters, you have never answered my questions. On the subject of my birth you have preserved absolute silence. You have also persistently refused me an interview, and I feel sure that it is merely owing to my threat of

investigation, that I am indebted to you for this visit." Here Morton paused and looked at the clergyman, who smiled slightly, and made a gesture of assent.

"Now," continued Morton, "the matter stands as follows: You admit that secrecy has been observed in regard to my parentage, and you allege that this secrecy is for *my* advantage, or to put it more properly, in the furtherance of my interests?"

"Yes," replied the clergyman, "I have repeatedly assured you that this is the case; that I myself have no interests at stake, but have simply acted as your father's agent. Every step that has been taken in regard to your education, etc., has been carefully considered both by your father and myself."

"That being the case," resumed Morton, "and I am convinced that it is the case, let me state to you the position I assume in regard to the whole matter. There is some alleged necessity for the concealment of my parentage, and this necessity is believed to be for the advancement of my own personal interests. I have never seen my parents, so far as I know, and, consequently, have no affection for them, for filial feeling comes from associations which I have never had. Neither have I any curiosity to know about them, for constant repression has deadened my curiosity, until

it has ceased to exist. I am perfectly satisfied with my present position in regard to my parents, and I have no desire to prevent them from preserving their secret, provided that a knowledge of it would not influence my future actions. Now you have assured me that such a knowledge could in no way influence my life, but upon this subject it seems to me that I must judge for myself. There are certain questions, to which I must have answers, in order to draw my own conclusions, and unless you are willing to answer these questions, to my complete satisfaction, I think it will become my duty, however unpleasant, to investigate the whole matter of my parentage, simply in order to satisfy my own conscience. Have I explained myself clearly to you?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Hamilton, "I understand you perfectly, and am ready to admit that there is justice in what you say. I do not anticipate what questions you desire to ask, but I am ready to listen to them, and will promise to answer them truthfully, if I can do so without betraying the confidence reposed in me."

"Then," said Morton, "I will only ask you what I consider necessary, and naturally the fewer questions I ask, the better you can preserve your secret. With your permission I will begin at once. Were my father and mother legally married to each other before my birth?"

"Yes."

"Then there can be no question as to the legitimacy of my birth?"

"No."

"Have either of my parents, or any of my ancestors or relatives, been accused of any crime?"

"No," replied the clergyman; "not to my knowledge, at any rate."

"Is there any history of insanity, or of any hereditary disease, in either my father's or my mother's family?"

"No."

"Have my parents other children?"

"Yes."

"Then the reasons which apply to me do not hold good in regard to these other children?"

"No."

"Do these other children know of my existence?"

"No."

"Did I as a child ever do anything which could make this secrecy advisable?"

"No."

Here Morton paused in his questioning; then, after looking thoughtfully at the clergyman for a moment, he continued in a less formal tone:—

"There are other questions which I am tempted to ask, but I refrain from doing so because they

would merely serve to gratify a curiosity which was not my motive in demanding this interview. Neither had I any sordid motives, although perhaps I have a right to know more exactly than I do, the particulars in regard to my parents' wealth. But I will leave these questions entirely at your discretion, to answer or not as you may think best. I will merely say that I should like to know whether both my parents are still living; whether they are rich; what position they may occupy; and any particulars you may be willing to give me about their other children; and you may tell me just as much or just as little as you please."

"As you are situated," replied the clergyman, "the less you know the better it is. But in regard to the money, I think I ought to be more explicit, and I will say that you have received your full share of your father's property. Moreover, your opportunity for augmenting what you have received is far greater than your father's chance of increasing what he has reserved for himself and the others. But beyond this I should prefer to tell you nothing. It has always been our intention to bring you up as an orphan; that you should form new ties, and lead a useful and happy life. Any particulars that I might give you, as to your family, would, in a measure at least, defeat our object. Believe me, my dear young man, when I say that we have acted as we have done,

solely because we think it to be for your interests. Try in the future to think as little as possible about your family."

Morton remained silent for some minutes after his visitor had concluded. Then taking him by the hand, he said, with much feeling:—

"Mr. Hamilton, I am convinced that what you say must be wise, and I will now try to let this matter rest forever. You have relieved my mind from doubts which have been causing me much anxiety of late. Now it only remains for me to thank you with all my heart, for the kindness you have always shown me."

Morton's eyes glistened as he said this, and the clergyman, who had been listening with great attention, warmly returned the pressure of his hand, saying earnestly:—

"You are a fine young fellow, I'll be bound. I am proud to have been of use to you. Now," continued he, "that our interview has come to such a satisfactory conclusion, I am going to ask for a cigar, and we will smoke the pipe of peace, while you shall tell me all about yourself and your prospects."

Morton hastened to comply with his visitor's suggestion, and taking a box of cigars from one of the drawers of his desk, offered them to the clergyman, who with great care selected one, in a manner which showed that his taste for tobacco had

been carefully educated. Morton also lighted one himself, and when he had got it fairly under way, he resumed his seat, and said : —

“I really have nothing of interest to tell you about myself, unless it is that I am going to Europe next week, for a few months’ vacation.”

“Indeed,” said the clergyman. “That looks as if the practice of law was very remunerative at present.”

“Well,” said Morton, “I certainly can’t complain about my practice, although if it had not been for the fortunate investment of my ten thousand dollars, I doubt if I should feel justified in taking a three months’ vacation. But I am glad we have mentioned the question of money, because I wanted to explain to you that I am comparatively well off, and should be glad to be of any assistance to my family if you thought they would accept it.”

“No, my dear fellow,” said the clergyman ; “your parents are comfortably situated in regard to worldly goods, and what is better, are thoroughly contented with their lot in life. But tell me about your property.”

“Property is a pretentious word,” replied Morton, laughing, “to apply to my little capital. But the story, such as it is, is a short one. I invested half my principal in a mine, by the advice of a friend. This mine proved to be an enormous

success, so that my five thousand dollars soon became forty thousand. This money I invested in bonds, which now pay me nearly three thousand dollars a year. Then the original sum I have used in various ventures, with considerable success; so that with my practice, which is worth four thousand dollars more, my income is a large one for a young bachelor. I am going to Europe with Doctor Lindsley. It is his father who has helped me so much. When do you return to Washington?"

"Not for a few weeks," replied the clergyman. "I am going to stay with one of my friends at the sea-shore, now that I am in the East. I, too, am taking a vacation."

"Can't you stay with me while you are in Boston?" asked Morton, eagerly. "It would give me great pleasure if you would make my home your own while you are here."

"No," replied Mr. Hamilton, "I thank you for your invitation, but I have written to my friend that he may expect me to-day. Indeed," said he, looking at his watch, "I ought to be going now, for my train leaves early in the afternoon."

"Well," said Morton, "if you can't stay with me now, at least you can promise that the next time you are here, you will come to me."

"Thank you," said the clergyman; "but I hope you will not misunderstand me when I say it will

be better not. My coming would merely serve to remind you of your unknown parents. But I should like you to write to me now and then, whenever any important event occurs in your life. I should like you to feel that I am your friend, interested in all that interests you."

"You are very kind to say so," replied Morton, "and I will certainly promise to write you, when anything of interest happens."

"I shall regard that as a promise," said the clergyman, "and I want you to remember in return, that if you are ever in any difficulty, or ever require assistance or advice, you have merely to send for me and I will come." So saying, Mr. Hamilton shook hands with Morton and made his preparations for departure. Morton unlocked the door, and held it open until his guest had passed out. Then he followed him into the entry, where he again thanked him and said good-bye, after which he returned slowly to his office, where, having resumed his chair, he was soon absorbed in deep thought.

CHAPTER II.

THE clocks in the neighborhood of the hospital were striking eight, when Morton drove up to the gate, in one of those coupés which stand about the street corners of Boston, and which are chiefly remarkable for their general shabbiness, and the jaded appearance of the horses which draw them. The driver of the coupé permitted his horse to come to a standstill before the iron gate of the hospital, and called out "Whoa," in a loud voice, evidently more with the idea of attracting the attention of the porter, than of inducing his tired horse to do what his appearance too plainly indicated he had been trying to do for the last decade. Whatever may have been the intention of the "Whoa," it had hardly been uttered before a small glass window was opened, and a man's head appeared through the casement.

"A gentleman to see Doctor Lindsley," called out the driver.

The head silently disappeared from the casement, and the window was shut from within. Then, presently, the iron gate, which barred the entrance to the hospital grounds, swung heavily open, moved by an unseen agency. The driver

gathered up his reins, and whipping up his horse, drove onward, the gate closing behind the carriage with a loud clang. The coupé having entered the hospital grounds, rolled smoothly along over the carefully kept driveway, which seemed like a floor after the rough, uneven pavement of the street, and at length came to a stop, before one of the side doors of the hospital.

Here Morton alighted, and having paid the coachman, he ran down a short flight of steps and entered the building. As the door closed behind him, he found himself in a long and dimly lighted corridor, with rough stone walls, and a floor flagged with stone. From this corridor, several other passages led off on either hand, and a visitor less experienced than Morton could have imagined himself in the labyrinth of Dædalus. Morton, however, seemed perfectly familiar with the place; he had no fear that a wrong turn might take him into that part of the building which is reserved for those afflicted with contagious disease, or might bring him face to face with some scene of suffering, but he walked confidently onward, with the air of one thoroughly at home, turning first to the right hand, and then to the left, now going up stairs, and now down, until at last he came to a long passageway, over which was a sign, informing the uninitiated that it led to Ward 10, and that the rooms of the House Officers were on either side.

Into this passageway Morton turned, and he continued on his way until he came to a door with a visiting card tacked between the panels, bearing the name of Doctor Edward Lindsley. Here he paused and gently knocked.

"Come in," said a voice, responding to his knock. Morton opened the door, and entered a small and singularly cheerless room. It was long and narrow, rectangular in shape, with a large window at the further end. The walls were dazzlingly white with no attempt of any kind at ornamentation, and as the room was very high-studded, this expanse of whitewashed wall gave it a desolate look, impossible to describe. The floor was of hard pine and bare; the furniture, which was in accordance with the rest of the room, was meagre and plain. On the left hand as you entered was a bureau, painted green, surmounted by a cracked mirror; and a washstand, with a broken pitcher, was wedged in between the bureau and the wall. Opposite the washstand was a bookcase, the shelves of which were filled with an array of works, any one of which was calculated to strike terror to the heart of a hypochondriac, while on the upper shelf was a collection of specimens in alcohol, which would have reminded one of the hearts of the House of Hapsburg, in the Hof Kapelle, in Vienna; or of the lamb's tongues in our butcher's shop, were it not for the

labels of carcinoma, sarcoma, etc., so neatly pasted on the sides of the bottles. Scattered about on a small table by the bookcase were a stethoscope, an otoscope, a laryngoscope, a stereoscope and an ophthalmoscope, instruments calculated to convince the most sceptical of the scope of the medical profession.

On either side of the window was an armchair, between which stood a small table with an elaborate microscope on it, covered with a bell glass. This microscope was the only object in the room suggestive of wealth.

Beside the bookcase was an iron bedstead, upon which, reclining at full length, lay the figure of a young man, somewhat obscured from view by a dense cloud of tobacco smoke, issuing from a short brierwood pipe, which was firmly clenched between the smoker's teeth. The young doctor, who was the sole occupant of the room, did not stir from his position on the bed, when Morton entered, but lay there impassively, reading and smoking, as if perfectly unconscious that he was not alone.

Edward Lindsley was the only son of one of the wealthiest merchants of Boston; and although he looked somewhat younger, he was a man of the same age as Morton. He was of medium height, of light complexion, with brown hair, and wore a light-brown beard, cut very short and square,

and neatly parted in the middle. His eyes were blue, but like his nose, were in nowise remarkable. His face was square, and the square lower jaw and prominent chin gave a look of resolution to the face, which otherwise would have been effeminate.

Lindsley, after graduating from Harvard, had passed two years in traveling in Europe, when he returned to Boston and studied medicine at the Harvard Medical School until he was appointed House Physician to the Hospital, where we now find him.

Lindsley and Morton had been the firmest of friends in college, where they had been class-mates and room-mates, and when, after graduating, Morton had turned to the law and Lindsley to medicine, their old friendship had still continued, as, unfortunately, is rarely the case. For with a difference in professions, comes a difference in tastes; new associates are formed, and the best of college friends gradually draw apart, as their paths in life diverge.

This, however, had not been the case with Lindsley and Morton. As each became interested in his respective profession, the firmer their friendship grew, and each seemed to derive a greater enjoyment from the other's society, their different tastes and views giving an additional pleasure to their intercourse. Then, too, the

unusual position of Morton, he being entirely without relatives, made him cling to his friendship with his old college chum all the more closely; while Lindsley, knowing this dependence on the part of his friend, was especially attached to him on this very account, so that when our story opens we find the two friends as inseparable as ever.

Morton closed the door, without speaking, and stood by the threshold, quietly looking at his friend. For a moment all was silent, and then Lindsley, taking his pipe from his mouth, said, with a quiet tone of authority, but without lifting his eyes from his book:—

“Put on a poultice, and give a teaspoonful of Mixture III.”

“Hang it, Ned!” said Morton, laughing, “do you take me for the nurse?”

“Why, bless my soul, old man!” cried Lindsley, starting up, “is that you? I thought it was ‘nuss,’ you knocked so gently.”

“So that’s the way you prescribe for your patients, is it?” asked Morton, banteringly. “How can you tell which medicine to give, when you don’t enquire the name of the patient who needs it?”

“Intuitive perception, I suppose,” replied Lindsley, carelessly. “I always order a poultice and Mixture III for every interruption after eight o’clock. But hang the patients,” continued he.

"Have something to smoke, and take a chair. Or will you take the bed?"

"Don't bother yourself," said Morton, sitting down in one of the chairs by the window; "I'll roll a cigarette and make myself comfortable. I only came up to tell you that I've got our passports and letters of credit all right. But it will be close work for you to get ready. The steamer sails on the first of July.

"I've got everything arranged," said Lindsley. "My successor will come on two days before his term of service really begins, so that I can get off on the twenty-eighth. I hate the idea of leaving the hospital, though."

"I dare say that traveling in Europe will soon reconcile you to the loss of your dear patients," said Morton. "My only regret is that I was rash enough to promise you not to travel all the time. You see, I have never been to Europe before, and may never go again, so I think I ought to see as much as possible while I am there.

"How American that is," laughed Lindsley. "I really believe you would like to rush about, traveling by night, staying one day in each place, hurrying from city to city, so as to go to just as many places as possible in the given time. Then you would read all the guide-books, lay in no end of clothes in London, and return to your native land a sadder and a wiser man, feeling that you

had *done* Europe, and wondering why other people liked it. No, my dear fellow, it's a lucky thing for you, that you will have me for a sort of balance wheel. There are two maxims to be followed in traveling abroad: First, stay in each place as long as you can; and second, shun your fellow countrymen as you would the devil."

"I am willing to keep to your first maxim if you insist upon it," said Morton, laughing again, "but I shall draw the line at number two."

"Well," said Lindsley, "I suppose you must have your own way about joining the Ellertons. I must say that I sha'n't mind seeing Miss Ellen again myself."

"No," said Morton, "I don't believe you will. You always chaff me about Miss Ellerton, whenever you get a chance, but in point of fact you like her just as much as I do."

"I admire her," said Lindsley, "but I can't say that I like her."

"That's what I call unjust," said Morton, rather more seriously. "You are extremely attentive to her, and put yourself out to please her. Then you say that you admire her for her beauty, and powers of fascination, but that you dislike her character, and the way she acts. If I disliked a girl's behavior, it seems to me that I should hardly be willing to tacitly *seem* to approve of it, by paying her attention."

"You must take the world as it is," said Lindsley, smiling at his friend's seriousness. "Besides, I can't flatter myself that my approval or disapproval would influence Ellen Ellerton's conduct in the slightest degree. But I agree with you that she is one of the handsomest girls I ever saw. Still, beauty is but skin deep, and if you skinned Miss Ellerton, nobody but a professional man could tell her from the old apple woman round the corner. Now my question is this: Is there enough left of Miss Ellerton to make her attractive without her integument? and candor compels me to answer: Not to my thinking."

"I hate to hear you talk in that strain," said Morton, "and especially about Miss Ellerton, for I like her. Of course she is young now, and rather too fond of admiration, perhaps, but she will get over that as she grows older, and will make a splendid woman. I look forward quite as much to meeting her again, as I do to the traveling."

"Well, old fellow," said Lindsley, "I won't say anything more about her. You like her and I don't. But after all I'm glad that is the case, for I can't imagine anything worse than our falling in love with the same woman. But you go in too much for good looks though, Morton. You are altogether too sentimental. Nothing is so unwise as to fall in love with a girl. Why don't you do as I do? You would have twice as much fun.

When I see a pretty girl I say to myself: You are lovely. Of course your hair is not all your own, and its graceful curls have an unmistakable look of hot-pencil about them. Your figure, to be sure, is more in accordance with modern ideas than with nature's curves. A little more fat in the orbital foramen might make your eyes more expressive. But taken as a whole you are pretty and charming, and I will have a good time with you. But I never lose sight of the fact that she is a human being, not a goddess. I remember that she has two hundred bones which nature has given her, and very likely as many more supplied by her dressmaker. I keep these facts in mind, and am heart whole. It's the best way."

"It may be the best way," said Morton, "if all you aspire to is to go through the world smirking and smiling, — if your point of sight is to become an old beau. My ideas of life, however, are more serious than yours. I want to be married."

"That's another mistaken idea of yours, Morton," interrupted his friend. "If a man likes a girl, the last thing in the world that he ought to do, is to marry her. Why the moment she is *his* wife *he* never sees her! Other men absorb all her time, and occupy all her thoughts. All her pretty looks and little fascinating ways are for them. All the husband gets is a sentimental starvation and new bills to pay."

"You call infatuation love, my dear fellow," said Morton. "If I ever married a girl I should expect her to love me in the same way that I loved her. Then she would care too much for me to go about flirting with every man she met."

"Just wait and see," said Lindsley, smiling at Morton's seriousness.

"It's no use for us to talk in this way," said Morton, "our ideas are so different. You can flirt with a girl and enjoy it. Then when you get through with one, you can always get somebody else to fill her place. I never want to be attentive to a girl unless I care for her, and then I care for her too much to say or do anything which might lower her in my own estimation. Besides that, it always seems to me that a woman puts herself under a man's protection, and that it would be unchivalrous for him to take advantage of circumstances, even if he wanted to."

"If you'll forgive me saying so, Morton, I think your ideas are largely due to your never having had any home life. You see women in society, dressed in their best clothes, and best manners. They are prepared for the occasion and are bent on conquest. Nothing is too great for them to aspire to, or too little for them to stoop to. They study you as they would study a book, and reading what you are, they try to please you, because you are a man. To you, they are not

what they really are, but what they think you would like them to be, and the result is, that you, seeing them at their best, judge them at their best, and you look upon them as the divinities they seem, instead of as bundles of vagaries, tied up with skeins of deceit. No, old man, if you would only realize that each woman is a creation, produced by the conversion of varying proportions of sweetmeats, beef, butter and bread, and remodeled by art, you would do better."

"I am not so inexperienced as you think," said Morton, laughing. "You doctors think that nobody knows human nature but yourselves, whereas a lawyer has an immense field for study in the reports of divorce trials. I believe it is quite possible to find plenty of women who think of higher things than fashion and attention. And apart from all ideas of love, there is something in the domesticity of the 'love-in-a-cottage' picture, which would tempt me to try my luck if I should ever find the right person."

"It may be possible," said Lindsley, "but it is far from probable, and seriously, Morton, I should be sorry to see you try it. Nothing handicaps a man like a wife. But what makes you so sentimental to-night? You used to agree with me that marriage was an end, not a means, of happiness."

"Well," said Morton, "the Rev. James Hamil-

ton, my former guardian, came to see me this morning, and has cleared up all my doubts about my family. This makes marriage possible for me, and viewed as a possibility it is more attractive, than from the eminence of the sour grapes."

"Good," said Lindsley; "and what did the physician of souls say?"

"O," replied Morton, "he did not say much. I wanted to know as little as possible, and he wanted to tell me even less, so that our conversation was a short one."

"But did you find out who your parents were, and what the mystery was about?"

"No, because I didn't ask. If I had asked I doubt whether he would have told me. I merely wanted to know whether there was anything which need influence my future life, and I find there is not. Now don't speculate about the secret, old fellow; I want to drop it forever. A man is what he makes himself, not what his parents have made him. I agree with the usurper Lycus in Hercules Furens: 'Qui genus jactat suum, aliena laudat.' I am myself, and people must take me as I am."

"All right," said Lindsley, getting up from the bed; "I will never speak about the matter again unless you suggest it. Now, look here, it's almost time for me to make my evening visit. What time does the steamer sail?"

"At three o'clock," replied Morton.

"Then," said Lindsley, "we can go to New York on the night train on Friday, and go directly on board."

"That was my plan," said Morton. "I have some last things to do, and don't want to leave any sooner than is necessary."

"Do you know any of the passengers who are going with us?" asked Lindsley.

"No one, except Mrs. Flyaway and those two Morris girls. I suppose they will bother us all the way across."

"If old Flyaway is only seasick," said Lindsley, "we can have a good deal of fun with the girls. You can discuss ethics and moral philosophy with the elder, while I discourse upon lighter subjects with her sister. She is an uncommonly gay young person, or was the last time I saw her."

Here the conversation between the two friends was interrupted, by a knock at the door, which, in response to Lindsley's "Come in," was gently opened by a tall, angular woman, conspicuous both for the neatness of her appearance and acidity of her smile.

"Well, nurse, what's the matter?" asked Lindsley, as the woman stood respectfully in the doorway, waiting for him to address her.

"Number 42 is in another convulsion, Sir," replied the nurse.

Lindsley turned to Morton, and observed : —

“A case of hystero-epilepsy, and an unusually interesting one. Wouldn't you like to come down and see it?”

“No, I thank you,” said Morton. “I have n't forgotten your butcher with hydrophobia yet. I want to sleep to-night. You go and look after your patient; I must go home.”

“I shall only be gone a minute,” said Lindsley; “won't you wait until I come back?”

“No,” said Morton, “I ought to be going.”

“Well, good-night, then,” said Lindsley, and he hurried off, all his former manner of indifference replaced by a look of intense interest as he followed the nurse down into the ward.

“Pleasant life!” said Morton to himself as he took his hat, and started on his way homeward.

CHAPTER III.

LINDSLEY and Morton sailed as they had intended upon the White Star Steamer which left New York on the first of July.

Their plans had been decided upon in a general way before they left home. Munich was to be their objective point. Here they were to pass a few days together, after which Morton was to say good-bye to his friend, in order to take a flying trip through Switzerland, while Lindsley was to leave for Vienna to spend a few months there in study.

Lindsley had chosen medicine for his profession because it was a study which interested him as nothing else did. He had not decided to become a physician because he had once helped a country doctor sew up a broken head, and was convinced thereby that he had such nerve as peculiarly fitted him for the medical profession. Neither had he deluded himself with the idea that he had a "turn for doctoring," because in boyhood he had been accustomed to soothe his grandmother's fancied ills, by judiciously administering brown-bread pellets. He had never believed himself to be a "natural bone-setter,"

because his mother's uncle had once, with the boldness of ignorance, reduced a dislocated shoulder at a picnic, nor had he been influenced by the idea that his manners were admirably suited to the successful practice of medicine. None of these unusual and striking qualifications had influenced him in the slightest degree, in his choice of professions, nor was he one of those who fancy that the medical profession is one which enables its votaries to gain an easy livelihood, imagining that huge fees are to be easily acquired by the counting of pulses, and the dispensation of a few sagacious nods, supplemented with a long prescription written in atrocious Latin. On the contrary, he had formed a very just idea of a physician's life before he had chosen that it should be his. He believed it to be the most unsatisfactory of all the professions, as far as tangible rewards are concerned, as well as the most arduous and the most ill-paid. He had observed in many cases how the young physician passes the best years of his life in a hard and bitter struggle for support, and had noted that success often comes only after it is too late to be appreciated or desired. Yet, knowing all this, he had decided to become a physician, because he had a love for the natural sciences, and because he found in medicine an opportunity for studying Nature in her last and highest form of develop-

ment, and because he recognized that it was an occupation which extended the greatest promises of a career of usefulness.

Lindsley had studied faithfully and thoroughly, and his hospital experience had admirably qualified him for entering upon practice. But much time had been consumed, and this decided him to curtail his study abroad, fearing lest he should lose confidence in himself by too much theoretical work. Lindsley, as we have said, was the only son of a wealthy merchant, and having the prospect of ample wealth before him, was not influenced by the idea of money. But he was very ambitious, and his knowledge of himself had convinced him, that with his tastes eminence could be better attained by close attention to practical work than by scientific research.

The passage across the Atlantic was such as is often experienced in the month of July; a succession of bright warm days, the surface of the ocean unruffled by the slightest breeze, while the motion of the ship was hardly sufficient to disturb the most squeamish of passengers. So that when it was known that the vessel was rapidly nearing Liverpool, the two friends began to experience that feeling of regret which so often comes to travelers at the end of a sea voyage. The intense monotony of the voyage had been broken for our two travelers by ministering to the comforts of

Mrs. Flyaway, and by occupying the leisure of her two nieces.

Mrs. Flyaway, as Lindsley had hoped, had been seasick during the whole voyage, in spite of the stillness of the ocean. She could hardly be called a person of cheerful temperament, being hypochondriacal and so completely occupied by her own imaginary ills, that she was in the habit of claiming the pity and sympathy of every one she talked with, no matter how slight her previous acquaintance might have been. During the intervals of her seasickness her mind was absorbed by the contemplation of all the terrible things which might happen, so that from the time the vessel left her moorings, until she reached her final destination, poor Mrs. Flyaway was in a state of constant perturbation, and suffered from a combination of nervous and gastric symptoms. On the first day as the boat steamed down the harbor, steering her way among the smaller craft, Mrs. Flyaway dreaded collisions, and when this danger seemed no longer imminent, and the vessel had neared the open sea, the thought of fogs and storms filled her with such gloomy apprehensions that it was with the greatest difficulty she could be prevailed upon to retire to her state-room, as she had proposed passing the night upon a sofa in the saloon, in order to be in instant readiness, should an accident occur. Each morn-

ing, during the first few days of the voyage, Lindsey was dispatched to enquire of the captain if a storm was impending; and it was no small tax even upon his vivid imagination to bring back such suitable and reassuring replies as would satisfy the nervous lady's fears. Then as the glorious weather of each succeeding day demonstrated the groundlessness of these fears, she would conjure up pictures of icebergs, or recall some ghastly description of the horrors of a fire at sea; and each day reiterated that she should never have sufficient courage to cross the ocean again, and that the mere anticipation of the journey back to America would be enough to spoil all her pleasure while traveling abroad.

In spite of the ridiculous nature of her fears, there was a certain pathos in this shrinking from imaginary danger, and in this tenacity of life on the part of one to whom the inevitable must necessarily be so near. Both the young men were moved by her mental suffering to an infinite compassion, and cared for the good lady's comfort with an assiduity that called forth her highest praises.

But, fortunately for them, there was one element which prevented their trip across the Atlantic from being a martyrdom, — Mrs. Flyaway could not converse. It would make her sick, she said, if she opened her mouth wide enough to

attempt it, and she could not be talked to because the voices of others made her head ache; so that Lindsley and Morton, having arranged her chair to her taste and tucked her up in her numerous rugs and shawls, were at leisure to enjoy the society of her two nieces, a privilege which they exercised to the fullest extent, for both the young ladies were pretty, and, I regret to say, somewhat fast.

In this way the nine days of their voyage had passed quickly away, and on the last evening, as the two friends were pacing the deck together, both regretted that they were to exchange the extreme monotony of life on ship-board, for the hurry and bustle of traveling on land.

"Why is it?" asked Lindsley, taking his cigar from his lips, after the two young men had been walking for some time in silence, "why is it that there is a feeling of antagonism between members of the three professions?"

"'First thou tellest a lie and then thou askest a question,' as the Quaker said," replied Morton, laughingly. "I am by no means sure that there is such an antagonism."

"Perhaps you don't see what I mean," said Lindsley. "Why is it the rule that the members of every profession sneer at all other professions, and affect to look down upon them as if each was of a lower intellectual standard, and inferior in usefulness to his own?"

"But do they?" asked Morton. "Are you not arguing from the particular to the general?"

"No," said Lindsley, "I don't think I am. As a rule you will find that what I say is true. Both lawyers and doctors sneer at the clergy. They are apt to look upon ministers as veritable wolves in sheeps' clothing, preying upon the pockets, instead of praying for the souls, of their parishioners. The clergyman on the other hand speaks pityingly of the lawyer, as one who is wholly godless, who encourages men and women to foster the worst passions of human nature, avarice and revenge, and who defends their motives for the commission of crimes. He, likewise, looks upon the doctor as useful in his way, but as one who neglects the immortality of the soul, for the mortality of the body, and who will not believe in the supernatural merely because he has never seen examples of it. Then the lawyer sneers at the doctor as an empiric who is always trying upon his patients experiments which usually fail; while the doctor, on his side, hates the lawyer because he thinks he is too narrow-minded to understand that medicine is not a positive science, and because he sneers at him."

"Well," said Morton, "there is certainly truth in what you say. For example I think there can be no doubt that many doctors look down on the clergy. A clergyman, however, occupies a

very difficult position in the community. His business is to tell his parishioners what they ought to do, and what they ought not to do, and he is expected to set a good example. But your average minister is human. He has some of the old Adam in him, and has passions and temptations like the rest of us, so that he is apt to fail in the very things he preaches to his flock. When this is the case some one will point his finger at him and call him a hypocrite, and others will speedily follow suit; the one who points first is usually the doctor. Then, again, the doctor is practical, while the minister is theoretical, and when the theories of the minister clash with the practical knowledge of the doctor, the latter naturally gets the best of the situation and considers his beaten opponent as deficient in intelligence. Bodies are tangible and souls are not, and the doctor, naturally sceptical, mistrusts the clergyman even when his motives are good. Then, too, he is materialistic, and does n't believe what the clergyman believes. Yes, doctors certainly look down on clergymen and fail to appreciate them I am afraid."

"Well then," said Lindsley, "so far we both agree. Now suppose you, as a lawyer, tell me how your profession looks upon doctors."

Morton laughed, and said:—

"That was a wise choice for you to have made

next, for I fear that lawyers also fail to properly estimate the doctors. The way physicians testify in court weakens the dignity of their profession. I remember once hearing a lawyer in court say to the judge: 'I will not consume the valuable time of this court in examining any medical experts, for, as your honor is well aware, I could summon doctors enough to join hands around the courthouse to swear to anything I asked.' But in the other cases I am not at all sure that you are correct. I don't see for instance what a doctor or clergyman has to find fault with in the law."

"No, I suppose not," said Lindsley, laughing; "but the very fact that you are able to point out the weaknesses of the other professions, while you think your own is unassailable, convinces me of the truth of what I say. But I am too sleepy to argue further with you. Some other time I will convince you. How does the idea of a Welsh rarebit and a glass of beer strike you?"

"Favorably," replied Morton; "but I must say that you have left your conversation at its most interesting point, and it strikes me that what you say about lawyers are 'words, words, empty words.'"

"Not a bit of it," said Lindsley; "they are ideas, and ideas are like plants: some are useful and some are ornamental, while others are weeds fit only to be pulled up and thrown away. Even the

useful cereals must be threshed and winnowed before they are ready to be served out as feed to the human herd. When new ideas occur to me I am continually surprised to see how much is chaff and how little is good grain. One must express his ideas once or twice in order to arrange them and to sift out the bad. Such a conversation as ours has been, is like a furnace fire that has gone out. It contains ashes and cinders, and the ashes, which are burnt-out thoughts, their usefulness all consumed, must be sifted out before we can make a good hot fire out of the half-consumed cinders which remain. Now, let's have our beer and Welsh rarebit, and forget the intellectual in our enjoyment of the physical."

So the young men threw away their cigars and made their way to the saloon, to order their compound, with an eagerness that betokened vigorous digestion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "Grand Tower" has been described so often and so well, and the practice of "doing Europe" has become so universal, that I will not weary you, dear reader, by needless repetition. Let me say in passing, however, that while some eyes are presbyopic and overlook much that is worth seeing, others on the other hand, which are myopic, look far too closely at many things; some travelers are accustomed to gaze at everything through their opera-glasses in the usual way, so that the beauties which they behold are magnified; while others looking through the larger end, discover that those things which they had expected to find so grand have dwindled into insignificance when viewed through the reversed lenses of their own experience. Happy is he who, without too much of prejudice, scepticism, or credulity, can enjoy the sights and scenes of foreign countries!

It is curious to notice how the varying experiences of European travel impress the different types of American tourists, and I have often thought that it might be interesting to classify them in much the same way as the zoölogist classi-

flies the different species of simiae, who, having lost their tails, claim closest kinship to their human cousins. In such a classification we should have, for example, the "Patriotic variety": your rich, self-asserting American citizen who says that the "American flag flies mighty high"; who is well versed in statistics, but ignorant of history; whose knowledge of foreign languages is even more rudimentary than his acquaintance with his native tongue; who knows figures better than traditions, and how to make money, better than how to spend it. It is he who destroys what pleasure you might have derived from looking at a beautiful river or a picturesque mountain, by telling you of bigger ones at home. He always has some practical answer ready, so that if you should venture to suggest that Rome is older than New York, you are pretty sure to be snapped up with a "Yes, and its death-rate per thousand is —— against —— per thousand in New York. That's all the good their antiquity does them. They ought to clear out all those old ruins; then they'd be healthier."

Then there is the "Home-comfort variety": those who think "Switzerland sweet pretty, Paris quite nice, and Rome real interesting, but after all give me the real solid comfort of an American breakfast, a furnace fire, and a rocking-chair to sit in while I read the dear old Transcript by a good gas-jet."

Class III might be described as the "Superlative variety": those who admire indiscriminately and in passionate terms; who think "Rome altogether too elegant, Switzerland awfully stunning, and Paris perfectly divine," always alluding to the latter, as "dear Paree." While traveling they are afraid lest they may be recognized as Americans, but if any foreigner more clever or more stupid than his fellows should mistake them for English, they realize their fondest hope. They see Europe, as it were, through other people's spectacles, admiring a painting not because it may happen to please their fancy, but because Baedeker has marked it with an *. They have no original ideas except in regard to themselves, and these ideas are pretty sure to be erroneous, according to the general way of thinking.

Variety IV in such a nomenclature would perhaps be the "Conscientious tourists." The individual of this genus settles down in a place, as a bee settles down on a clover blossom, prepared to extract all the nectar that the limited capacity of his honey-bags will enable him to carry off. He reads all the guide-books, and studies out everything that is generally considered worthy of visiting. Then he makes it the business of his life to see everything that he has decided ought to be seen. He takes notes and keeps a diary, studies the pros and cons of all disputed questions, and

when at length he frees Europe of his presence, and returns to his native land, he says that he has "improved his opportunities!" He has made pleasure a burden to himself, and does his best to destroy the pleasure of others by his artful questions and superior knowledge. Such a species should be labeled dangerous.

Variety XCIX would be described as "Pleasure seekers," and it was to this class that Lindsley and Morton belonged. The few who compose this class visit Europe for pleasure alone. As a rule they attain their object, and even if they do not see quite so many pictures and churches as some others, still I think the reader will agree with me in thinking that they are not less wise than those who see more, and that if by any chance they should forget the exact diameter of St. Peter's Dome, or the height of the column Vendôme, they are quite as likely to remember enough to make the recollection of their foreign wanderings pleasant to look back upon when they are wearied with the drudgery of our busy American life.

Traveling after this manner our two friends proceeded directly to the continent, having stayed only a few days in England; for England did not especially attract them, and Englishmen still less. Both agreed with Emerson, who says of the English, that every one of these islanders is a little island in himself; and Morton and Lindsley has-

tened to leave this archipelago of barren islands, each of which seemed to them to be surrounded by an arctic current of stolidity and conceit, for the more congenial atmosphere of the continent.

Munich was reached in the early part of August, and we find our two travelers in the Alte Pinakothek early one Wednesday morning, looking at the various pictures and determined to see just as much as was agreeable and no more.

"Are you tired of high art, Morton?" asked Lindsley of his friend as they were standing before one of the large Rubens pictures. "If you are, let's go to the Erzgiesserei and see the model of our statue of Edward Everett, in the Public Garden at home. The last time I was in Munich I went there, and all of a sudden I found myself face to face with the old man. It was just as if you had transported me to Boston, and it only needed the broom in his hand to complete the illusion."

"What's the Erzgiesserei?" asked Morton.

"Why, it's a bronze foundry," explained Lindsley. "So many of our American statues are cast there, we must certainly visit it before leaving Munich."

"Let's stay here a little longer," said Morton. "I want to see the rest of these Rubens pictures before I go."

So the two friends strolled on through the gal-

lery examining and criticizing the different paintings. At length they stopped for a moment before a quaint old picture of a Dutch interior, and Lindsley began to criticize it somewhat learnedly, when a voice behind them asked : —

“Traveling for pleasure, sir?” The voice proceeded from a tall man, unmistakably an American, who had been listening to Lindsley’s remarks, and upon whose arm a showily dressed woman was hanging. Lindsley glanced quickly at his interlocutor and replied laconically, without turning, —

“No, for study.”

“Architect?” inquired the stranger pronouncing the *ch* with a peculiarly insinuating softness, nudging his wife with his elbow at the same time.

“No,” replied Lindlsey, courteously, “I am a student of interiors.”

“Thank you,” said the man, with the air of one who is pleased at his own sagacity; “I told my wife you was something to do with art.”

“Pardon me,” replied Lindsley, with the same formal courtesy. “I am a physician.”

“O,” replied the tall man. “Good-morning, sir;” and he walked quietly away, with his wife still leaning heavily on his arm.

Morton smiled to himself at this little episode, and was administering a rebuke to his friend as they leisurely sauntered into the next room, for having needlessly hurt the feelings of the stranger,

when another group of tourists of a very different description caught his eye. Directly opposite the door by which they entered the room was a tall and singularly beautiful girl, who, standing with her side face turned toward the young men, was gazing abstractedly at one of the pictures ; while a lady and gentleman, presumably her father and mother, were sitting on the red plush seat in the middle of the room, looking listlessly about.

"There are the Ellertons," cried Morton, interrupting himself in the midst of his lecture, and he walked hastily forward and shook hands with the lady and gentleman, who greeted him with great cordiality. But the girl, who was still intently gazing at the picture, which happened to be an exquisite landscape of Ruysdael, did not look up, but continued her contemplation of the painting with a far-away look in her eyes.

"How do you do, Miss Ellerton ?" said Morton, walking up to her and holding out his hand.

The girl turned slowly to the speaker, and recognizing him with a smile, gave him her hand very cordially, but without the slightest embarrassment, saying, —

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Morton ? I am so glad to see you. I knew you were in Europe, but Munich is the last place I should ever have expected to meet you in, especially in such hot weather as this."

"That is what I ought rather to say to you; for who could have hoped to meet Miss Ellerton in such a dull place as Munich in the summer?"

"Miss Ellerton," replied the girl, "is not so wedded to gayety as you seem to think. But we are here because of papa. You know that papa is not well, and the doctor says that he must have mountain air, so we are going to a quiet little village in the Austrian Tyrol, Switzerland is so noisy."

Here Lindsley, with Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton, joined them, and the conversation became general. The Ellertons were staying at the Hotel of the Four Seasons, while Morton and Lindsley were at the Englischer Hof, and thus the two parties had not met, although both had arrived in Munich the same day.

Mrs. Ellerton and Lindsley's mother had been school girls together, and as they had lived near each other after their respective marriages, the two families were on terms of the greatest intimacy. Mrs. Ellerton and Lindsley had therefore many subjects of common interest, and they were soon engaged in asking and answering questions with the utmost rapidity, while Morton detailed the latest home news to Mr. Ellerton and his daughter.

After some time had been passed in this way, Mr. Ellerton, who looked extremely tired, inter-

rupted his wife, in the midst of some graphic description of bargains to be had near the Residenz, saying that he must go back to the hotel.

"O papa!" objected Miss Ellerton, "must we go now? We have n't seen half the pictures!"

"If your mother is willing, you can remain, and I will return to the hotel," replied her father.

"Yes," said Mrs. Ellerton, "you go home, James, and lie down. Mr. Morton and Edward will see that we get back safely."

Morton and Lindsley eagerly assented to this arrangement, and Mr. Ellerton, after having asked them to dine in the evening, took leave of the party and walked slowly away, while Lindsley and Mrs. Ellerton resumed their conversation.

"Come, mamma," said Miss Ellerton, "we stayed for sight-seeing, not for gossip. Can't you talk with Doctor Lindsley and look at pictures at the same time?"

Neither Miss Ellerton nor Lindsley ever addressed the other except in terms of formal courtesy, although they had known each other for such a long time; from which it may perhaps be argued that neither was especially fond of the other.

"You look at the pictures alone, my dear," replied Mrs. Ellerton; "I will join you after I have rested awhile."

"Mr. Morton, must I look at the pictures quite alone?" asked the girl, glancing up at him with

that undefinable expression in her eyes which is the first lesson in the coquette's primer. In answer to the young man's eager reply she laughed in a slightly conscious way, showing a dimple in either cheek, and led the way into the next room, closely followed by Morton.

Miss Ellerton was an extremely beautiful girl. She was perhaps rather too tall, but her figure was lithe and exquisitely proportioned. Her complexion, her greatest beauty, was light, and of extraordinary brilliancy, and her hair, which was somewhat coarser than is usually seen, was very crisp and wavy, and of a reddish-golden tint. It was arranged over her forehead in what is called a "bang," and served, as does a golden frame, to enhance the beauty of the picture it adorns. Her features were of the Grecian type, perfectly regular, and her blue eyes were large and expressive, and had a curious way at times of turning darker under certain circumstances, until they became nearly violet. This change in color took place as she looked up at him, Morton thought, and the young man accompanied the girl into the adjoining room with a feeling of embarrassment that was a totally new experience to him. The two young people had not met for nearly six months. Previous to that they had seen each other often, but chiefly at balls and receptions, where they had been upon terms of "mild flirtation." Morton

was such a handsome fellow, and had done so much more than the other young men of his age in the way of distinguishing himself, that he was very favorably looked upon by the younger women of society. Then, too, he was so serious, that his attentions had that air of reality about them, which made them highly prized by the different belles, all of whom endeavored to add him to their little courts; and Miss Ellerton, too, among the others, had tried her various arts on him with such success that when she left for Europe she could have considered him, without flattery to herself, as one of her "stand-bys." But Morton was conscious of some change in their relations, as they walked about looking at the pictures. He fancied that the Miss Ellerton of the picture gallery in Munich was a different person from the Miss Ellerton he had hitherto known. He thought the girl was much improved by her trip abroad, and that it was only a new dignity she had acquired which prevented their conversing upon the old familiar footing. The longer they talked together the more formal Morton became, so that when Lindsley and Mrs. Ellerton joined them, the interruption of their tête-à-tête was a relief to both, and the constraint which had become mutual soon wore off in the general conversation which followed.

"Mr. Morton and I proposed going to the

Bronze Foundry, to see Edward Everett," remarked Lindsley, as they were leaving the last salon. "Would n't you like to take it in on the way home?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Ellerton, "if we have time before lunch. But as we are going to see the statue of Bavaria this afternoon we must get home early."

"Do let's go, mamma," said Miss Ellerton, eagerly; then turning to Lindsley, she said: "We are only going to stay here a day or two, and I want to see all I can."

"We shall have plenty of time if we start at once," replied Lindsley, looking at his watch. "So you are an enthusiastic sight-seer, Miss Ellerton?" continued he, as they walked down the broad steps on their way to the carriage.

"Yes," replied the girl, "I am afraid I am. But do tell me about this Erzgiesseri. Is it really worth seeing?"

While Lindsley was describing the great bronze foundry and the many familiar models it contains, the party had descended the steps of the Pinakothek, and engaged an open carriage which was standing before the door. Morton helped the two ladies to their places and made Lindsley get in before him, a manoeuvre which enabled him to retain the place opposite Miss Ellerton for himself, so that he again found himself talking with her,

while Lindsley was engaged in conversation with her mother.

This time Morton was far more at his ease, and the conversation of the two flowed so easily, and appeared so mutually agreeable, that Lindsley, as he looked at his friend, privately made up his mind to caution him, on the first opportunity that presented itself, against the insinuating effects of women's society in general, and Miss Ellerton's in particular.

"Morton and I separate on Friday," remarked Lindsley, during a pause in the conversation. "He starts for Switzerland, and I for Vienna. If you are going to the Tyrol, perhaps I might manage to join you for a part of the way."

"No," said Mrs. Ellerton, "we are not going near Salszburg, as you suppose, but to a little town near Innsbruck, in the valley of the Ziller. I wish you could go with us."

"It would be out of the question for me," said Lindsley, "but I doubt if Morton would require much urging. He will be like a cat in a strange garret without me."

"I wish you *could* join us, Mr. Morton. Innsbruck is well worth seeing, and a few days in the Zillerthal would not be quite lost. It will be so very dull for you without Doctor Lindsley."

"You are very kind," said Morton, in answer to Mrs. Ellerton, "but," continued he, looking at

her daughter, "I am afraid I should be an intruder."

"On the contrary, it would be a great pleasure to Mr. Ellerton, as well as to me, to have you with us," replied Mrs. Ellerton, "and I really do not see why it would not be a pleasant excursion for you."

Morton hesitated, and it is well known that those who hesitate are lost. Moreover, he liked the idea of joining their party, and he thought, too, that he read some encouragement to Mrs. Ellerton's proposition in her daughter's eyes, so he replied:—

"I must confess that I don't look forward with much pleasure to traveling alone, and I shall accept your offer, before you have time to withdraw it."

Here the carriage drove up to the Erzgiesseri, where our travelers alighted; and after taking a hasty survey of the celebrated foundry, and after renewing their acquaintance with Edward Everett, George Washington, and other old friends, the two ladies were driven back to their hotel in good season for lunch, both declaring that thanks to the young men, they had passed a most delightful morning.

"You are done for, Morton," said Lindsley, as the two friends, after leaving the ladies, were being driven back to their own hotel. "You are

hooked, and mark my words, if you go to the Tyrol with Ellen Ellerton, she will land her fish."

Morton laughed, and replied to his friend:—

"There's more doubt about the landing than the hooking, I fancy. But 'there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and lip,' and even after one is landed he may be thrown aside like a sculpin."

"You may laugh, old man," said Lindsley, suddenly adopting a serious tone, which implied more than his words, and betokened no kindly feeling for the object of his dissertation. "You may laugh, but Miss Ellerton is a flirt, and I warn you not only against her, but against her whole genus. A coquette is all very charming, but a flirt is quite a different matter. She is merely an experimenter who operates upon subjects of the opposite sex. She studies the anatomy of the feelings just as the physiologist studies the anatomy of the rabbit he is vivisecting. She knows just where to cut and what to spare; and she will dissect out your feelings and sentiments, and ligature your emotions just as pitilessly as a scientist will prosecute his researches upon living tissues; but with a different motive and less useful result. For while the scientist, in search of useful knowledge, keeps his victim unconscious, and kills him during his sleep, the flirt's patient, experimented upon for the gratification of an idle vanity, lives to suffer in proportion to the success of the experiment, and if he

recovers, does so with a faith so shaken that he can never again appreciate that most beautiful phase of human nature, — true womanhood. Bah! I have no patience with these social vivisectionists.”

“‘Plato,’” said Morton, “‘thou reasonest well!’”

CHAPTER V.

THE following day was passed in sight-seeing, and Morton was in such constant attendance upon Miss Ellerton, that Lindsley was not surprised when his friend persisted in his intention of joining the Ellertons in their Tyrolean trip. Lindsley, however, did not listen to this plan of Morton's without many jocular warnings and much advice, for he thought he had detected an infatuation in his friend's manner towards Miss Ellerton, that was prophetic of more than an ordinary flirtation. Lindsley, as has been intimated before, was not fond of Miss Ellerton, and he thought her the last girl whom Morton should choose for a wife. But this was a subject on which he felt he had no right to argue with his friend, and he was obliged to content himself with friendly banter and humorous advice, under which was a substratum of seriousness, in which he clothed his real thoughts.

Friday was the day set for Lindsley's departure for Vienna. He took leave of his friend that morning with a feeling of misgiving, for he felt a presentiment that Morton was on the eve of a crisis in his life which he feared was destined to bring him unhappiness.

“‘But a wilful man maun have his way,’” thought Lindsley to himself, “and Morton is old enough to judge for himself;” so he said nothing more on the subject, but bade his friend good-bye with a semblance of cheerfulness, in spite of any misgivings he may have felt.

The same afternoon the Ellertons, accompanied by Morton, started for Zell, the Tyrolean town where Mr. Ellerton proposed to pass the summer. He had chosen Zell as his summer headquarters partly because of its comfortable inn, and partly on account of the exquisite prettiness of its scenery. I say prettiness because the scenery throughout the Zillerthal is not grand. The mountains are not high, nor is the snow upon them especially white; the river is neither broad nor remarkably swift, nor is there anything especially worthy of remark about the deep green verdure of the fields, nor of the varied foliage of its trees. But nevertheless these different elements combine in making the scenery of the valley very pleasing and attractive, and it is to this very negative quality that it owes its greatest charm, that wonderful air of quiet and repose, which pervades not only the town, but also the whole valley of the Ziller. It was because of this very tranquillity that Mr. Ellerton had decided upon Zell for his resting-place during the summer. Here he could enjoy all the benefits of mountain air without the noise and bustle of the crowded Swiss towns.

The trains in this part of Germany are seldom crowded, and our travelers secured a compartment to themselves in which they were soon comfortably ensconced, Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton sitting near the window at one end of the carriage, while Miss Ellerton and Morton occupied the two seats near the other. It was a glorious day, and the scenery along the route was especially charming in the soft summer air, but it did not tempt Morton from looking at the beautiful face that was opposite him, nor did it deprive him of an occasional glance into the depths of the eyes which met his.

The journey from Munich to Jenbach was reached all too soon; at least so Morton thought, as he dismounted from the carriage, and assisted the others to alight.

On the platform of the station, our travelers were greeted by the landlord of the hotel, who had driven over from Zell to meet his guests, in one of those curious two-seated Tyrolean wagons, which are drawn by two horses, the driver sitting on a seat precariously situated on the pole. Into this wagon the party embarked, and they were soon on their way, their luggage following in a cart behind.

The drive from Jenbach to Zell was a delightful one, and it was particularly attractive to the travelers, who enjoyed the cool mountain air of the summer evening, after the heat and dust of the

journey in the cars. The road is smooth and well-kept, like most of the highways throughout the Austrian Tyrol, and is very picturesque as it follows the curves of the river which winds in and out through the valley.

The valley is shut in on either side by mountains, which present an extremely varied appearance, some being beautifully smooth and green, and almost perfectly rounded, with here and there a chalet perched upon a ridge, or again nestling in a dimple; others are densely wooded; and then, as one penetrates further into the valley, here and there a snow-capped brother appears, higher than the rest, and serves to add a contrast to the scene.

The drive occupied more than four hours, but at last Zell was reached, and the wagon rattled over the pavements of the principal street of the town, and drew up in the courtyard in front of the hotel. Morton sprang down first, and there was a devotion on his part as he helped Miss Ellerton to alight, and a glow on the young lady's face as she thanked him with rather more fervor than the occasion seemed to demand, that would have led the most unprejudiced observer to suspect that there was some softer influence at work with the young people than the influence of the mountain.

Zell is a quaint little town, situated on the right bank of the Ziller; not so little, however, but that

the reader can find it on the map of Austria, if his curiosity should induce him to look there, for it is one of the principal towns in the valley of the Ziller, and boasts a population of several hundred souls, (if the reader will pardon this conventional assumption,) a castle, two hotels, and a church.

The Hotel zur Post, in which Mr. Ellerton had engaged rooms, was kept by the postmaster of the village. It was a large, wooden building, painted white, three stories high, and very modern looking. In front of it was a stone-paved courtyard, at one end of which was a large tree, with a table and seats beneath, — a resort much frequented by the peasants, who were accustomed to group about there and drink their beer in summer evenings after their day's labor was ended.

On the other side of the courtyard was the garden, which, like most of the gardens in an Austrian village, combined the useful with the ornamental. Among the sunflowers, asters, and roses, there were cabbages, destined for the odoriferous sauerkraut, lettuce, intended for the salat, and chamomile, planted with paternal foresight, to soothe the vague pains of infant sufferers. In the middle of the garden was the single tobacco plant permitted by the Austrian law.

But the garden did not depend solely upon the Creator for its attractions, for interspersed throughout its extent were posts seven feet high or there-

abouts, surmounted by different colored glass balls, and in one corner stood an arbor, in which many a pair of village lovers had plighted their troth. The whole garden is a pattern of neatness, thus affording a sharp contrast to the roughly paved, untidy street, which, forming its boundary on the further side, leads down to the bridge which crosses the river just below the town.

The hotel in which Mr. Ellerton had engaged rooms is more like an English posting inn than an hotel, as we Americans understand the meaning of the word, but under its unpretentious roof, and in the rural little town, Henry Morton and Ellen Ellerton passed the happiest days of their lives.

Morton's visit was indefinitely prolonged, and the friendship of the two young people grew into something more than friendship in the constant companionship of the two weeks which followed. Mr. Ellerton's illness, and his wife's devotion to his wants, had enabled the young people to pass more time in each other's society than would otherwise have been the case, although both Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton thought they recognized those traits in Morton which would go far in reconciling them to his marriage with their only daughter.

For Morton, introduced by Lindsley, had been a constant guest at their house in Boston, and was consequently well known to them; and they, in studying the characters of their daughter's various

admirers, had learned to appreciate the many qualities for which he was conspicuous, and their recognition of what was really noble in the man had led them, as must be the case in the freedom of our American society, to overlook the obscurity of his birth. But Mr. Ellerton's greatest weakness was pride of family ; and when he first knew Morton he was prejudiced against him, because of his want of antecedents, though this prejudice afterwards wore off. He used frequently to remark to his wife that "after all, there are really no families in America," — besides his own, of course, — "and the one thing which removed all objections which might be made to Mr. Morton on this score was the fact that he had no relations." So Morton's visits to the Boston house were not only tolerated, but almost encouraged, and in the same way Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton did nothing to discourage his attentions to their daughter, in Zell.

As Lindsley had said, Morton was very romantic in his views of women. Owing to the peculiar circumstances of his early life, he had never known the relationship of a mother or a sister, and his only knowledge of a woman's thoughts and feelings had been that derived from fiction.

Until now he had never seen a lady except in the ordinary way of society, so that living in the same house with Miss Ellerton, and seeing her constantly, was to him like the opening of an unknown

book, in which each little act of coquetry was a page to be studied; that he found this study an entrancing one is needless to say. He found himself watching her every motion, and wondering what the thoughts were that prompted each little act. Everything she did fascinated him, although he could not have said wherein the fascination lay. She was to him as is a newly discovered world to the astronomer, a celestial body, as it were, in an atmosphere of romance and surrounded by a halo of doubt.

She was, he confessed to himself, his first love, and he loved her with a passion which was all the more intense because it came to him in his maturity instead of his boyhood.

And she, on her part, found great attraction in Morton's unconventionality; for when the small talk of flirtation had been supplanted by the more serious conversation which necessarily comes with greater intimacy, Morton had laid bare all the secrets of his highest consciousness with a freedom surprising to himself; and all his sentiments and aspirations were to the girl so novel and so much grander and nobler than her own, so different from what she had been accustomed to hear from men she had hitherto known, that it seemed to her that the companionship of Morton had revealed to her a new and ideal life. She was attracted to him by his beauty, his strength, and his manliness;

then, too, there was, in feeling her power over the self-contained, reticent man, over a mind so much stronger than her own, something which was peculiarly attractive to her vanity, and kindled in her a feeling which had something of kinship with Morton's stronger passion. So that when we rejoin them two weeks after the close of the last chapter, we find that the event dreaded by Lindsley was not by any means a foolish fancy.

Early one morning as Morton came down stairs, he heard the sound of the klaffer played very gently in the dining-room, and upon looking into the room he saw Miss Ellerton standing by the table with one of the little mallets in her hand. She blushed as she gave him her hand, as if fearing that he might think she had wished to attract his attention by the sound of the instrument, and she looked so lovely as she stood there, the glow of her youthful health heightened by her rising color, that Morton longed to tell her how passionately he had grown to love her, and to ask her to trust herself to him, to be worshiped and adored forever.

Morton was a man of strong emotions, and the contact of her warm hand, as it rested in his, sent the blood surging through its channels in a way that caused him actual pain. His face became deeply flushed and the girl, with a woman's instinct, frightened by the intensity of the feelings

she had roused and fearing that the long-expected, but dreaded moment had arrived, gently withdrew her hand, and hastened to break the silence with the commonplace remark:—

“What a lovely morning, Mr. Morton.”

Morton suppressed his feelings as best he could, thinking that he had too much at stake to trust his fate to one precipitate outburst, and replied, diplomatically:—

“Altogether too lovely to stay in-doors. Won’t you take a short walk before breakfast?”

To this proposition Miss Ellerton assented; and having taken up her sunshade in lieu of a hat, the two lovers, for such we may now consider them, were soon walking down the road in the direction of the river.

The path they had chosen was not sufficiently secluded to induce Morton to broach the subject nearest to his heart, as they constantly encountered groups of peasant women, with their rakes and pitchforks, on their way to the hay-making in the neighboring fields. Each group that they passed regarded the handsome couple with a friendly interest and curiosity. They all seemed so cheerful and eager for their work, that Miss Ellerton remarked to Morton as they turned back toward the hotel:—

“How perfectly contented these poor peasants seem, although the lives they lead would seem to us of the greatest hardship.”

"Yes," replied Morton; "they have little and are therefore contented, while those who have much are continually striving for more. The peasant has his hopes and ambitions like ourselves, but he is happier than we are, because his ambitions are more likely to be within the realms of possibility and more easily realized. He can never be like me, striving for an object, which if unattained must cause him life-long unhappiness."

"How ungrateful you are, Mr. Morton. You, too, who have been so much more successful than other young men, and who have always said that nothing was unattainable for those who really try."

"I was not speaking of professional success, Miss Ellerton. There are other, far higher objects of ambition for a man to strive for."

"Yes," replied the girl, somewhat mischievously, "it seems to me that there ought to be. Men think so much of eminence and wealth that they care too little for moral perfection, I am afraid."

"I did not mean moral perfection either," explained Morton, who was too rapidly approaching dangerous ground to see his companion's efforts to avoid the subject. "I meant that one great object which must eventually become the goal of every man's ambition. I have always thought that there should sometime come to every man a love for some woman, which should be the

strongest feeling of his nature. That he could feel that his life was devoted to making the happiness of her life; that he could work for her, sacrifice for her, suffer for her, die for her if need be, always feeling that his one object was to secure her purest happiness; that he could love her better than the whole world beside, and that so loving, he too might know that he was himself beloved. I have always hoped that I might know such a love as this, and now, in these past few weeks, the reality has come almost unawares. You have taught me the greatest happiness of my life, Miss Ellerton, and now I feel like a man waking from a dream, who dreads the return of consciousness fearing lest his beautiful vision should be dissipated." Morton spoke as if talking to himself, but as he finished speaking he saw the figure of Mr. Ellerton waiting for them in the garden.

Recognizing that nothing was to be gained by too much haste, while everything might be lost, he turned hurriedly to his companion, and continued:—

"A hope often becomes such a part of one's life that one hesitates trying to fulfil it, fearing that he may lose even the hope. Did you never feel that, Miss Ellerton?"

"Yes," replied she: "I have felt so, but then I am a woman. Everything is possible for a man." She looked up at him as she spoke, and her glance

ought to have reassured him, for the blue eyes had become violet eyes during his last speech, and they were dimmed with tears. He only looked into them for a moment, for she left him abruptly and ran forward to greet her father, but he thought he had read hope and encouragement in their misty depths, and he was conscious of a new courage as he walked forward to wish Mr. Ellerton good-morning.

"A beautiful day for our trip to Achen See," said Mr. Ellerton, as after their morning greetings they stood in the little garden.

"O papa," said his daughter, slightly confused, "I was so afraid you might not feel well enough to go."

"I grow more robust each day, my dear," replied her father, "and I think it quite probable that I shall even take pleasure in this excursion. But there is your mother at the window. We must go in to breakfast."

Miss Ellerton slipped her hand through her father's arm, and with Morton by her side they all walked back to the hotel for breakfast, which had been ordered earlier than usual that they might start before the heat of the day, on their excursion to the lake.

CHAPTER VI.

As soon as breakfast was over, the whole party, having embarked in the wagon which had brought them up from Jenbach, started on their excursion to Achen See, Morton taking the vacant place beside Miss Ellerton, which he had now learned to regard as his exclusive right.

As Mr. Ellerton had a great distaste for the hotels of the ordinary German watering-places, crowded with their miscellaneous throng of guests, it had been decided that the party should not stop at Pertisau for table-d'hôte dinner, as is the usual custom among excursionists to the lake, but that, taking luncheon with them, they should picnic in some unfrequented place under the trees by the shore.

After reaching Jenbach the road becomes very steep, winding up the mountain for several miles. At this point of their trip the whole party, with the exception of Mr. Ellerton, dismounted from the wagon to make the ascent on foot, so as to lessen the labor of the horses which toiled onward, dragging the heavy wagon after them, and making frequent stops to rest. The pedestrians walked behind, keeping well up with the carriage,

exchanging now and then remarks with Mr. Ellerton, and took advantage of the frequent halts of the laboring horses to pause and enjoy the varying beauty of the scenery. Thus the whole party kept together, and no opportunity occurred to Morton for the quiet tête-à-tête with Miss Ellerton that he had so much desired, before they found themselves in sight of the farmhouse at Breslau where they were to engage their boat. Here they left the wagon, and having engaged of the farmer a row-boat suitable to their needs, they proceeded to the shore of the lake, which was but a short distance from their halting-place.

Achen See, which is one of the most beautiful lakes of the North Tyrol, is celebrated for the deep blue color of its water, and for its extreme altitude. It is situated in a long, narrow valley in the midst of the mountains, which, covered with snow even in the hottest days of summer, rise on one side almost perpendicularly from the surface of the water. On the farther side of the lake the shore rises in a series of densely wooded slopes, through which the road winds leading to the head of the valley. The excursionists having embarked in their boat, Morton took the oars, and they were soon on their way towards the head of the lake, away from the noisy occupants of the hotels at its lower end. As the boat, following the line of the shore, gradually proceeded further and

further on its course, propelled by Morton's steady strokes, the shores of the lake became more and more deserted, and the intense solitude of the scene was only interrupted by an occasional boat-load of excursionists, who, like themselves, were enjoying the beauty of the lake from the calm surface of its waters.

Morton had directed the boat's course along the edge of the shore that they might choose a spot suitable for their picnic ground, and a considerable time was lost before the fastidious tastes of Mr. Ellerton were at length satisfied, and a place was discovered, sufficiently shaded from the sun, and at the same time protected from the mountain wind, which was cold even in the warm summer day. Here the party landed, and was soon ensconced in a cosy nook, commanding a fine view of the mountains and the lake.

But Morton was in no mood to sit calmly down to enjoy the scenery. He had come to the conclusion that the time had now arrived when he should make his feelings known to Miss Elierton, and had firmly determined to learn his fate before the day was past. So with much embarrassment and in a hesitating manner he approached the girl, who was sitting on the grass at her father's feet, and constrainedly asked if he might not row her to the opposite side, where they could see the views from a different point. To this proposition

Miss Ellerton, after a slight demur, assented, and again embarking in the boat, this time, however, unaccompanied by the older people, they were soon gliding smoothly over the surface of the lake on their way to the opposite shore. Miss Ellerton sat in the stern, dragging one hand through the eddies which the boat made in its steady progress through the water, while Morton watched her as he rowed, thinking how white and beautiful her hand appeared through the clear mountain water, with the crystal drops glistening upon the round arm above.

Morton was an accomplished oarsman, having won many prizes in his college days, and his strongly proportioned figure was displayed to the best possible advantage, by the light-colored flannel mountain suit he wore, with knickerbockers and dark-blue stockings. His companion, as she glanced up at him from time to time, as he rowed leisurely along, thought she had never seen such a handsome figure — such a perfect impersonation of manly strength and power.

After they had rowed some distance in silence, Morton rested upon his oars, and looked steadfastly at his companion, who was gazing absently into the depths of the water. As the progress of the boat slackened, the girl looked up, and her eyes met Morton's, who, becoming suddenly embarrassed, said, apologetically : —

"I wish I could pass the rest of my life with you, Miss Ellerton, as I have these last few weeks."

For a moment the girl did not reply; then with that woman's instinct of trying the extent of her power over the man she loves, she coldly returned her lover's glance, and said, in her most frivolous and artificial way:—

"Thank you very much, Mr. Morton, for saying so, but haven't you already stayed much longer in the Tyrol than you at first intended?"

A dash of cold water could not have surprised Morton more thoroughly than did these few simple words; and he started as if he had been suddenly struck. He was surprised at the coldness of her tone and her altered demeanor, for the walk before breakfast and the girl's parting glance had led him to expect far different treatment. For a moment he sat as if dazed, his whole expression changing, and his face becoming colorless. Then he asked, in constrained and formal tones:—

"Have I stayed too long, Miss Ellerton?"

"You ought to be the best judge of that, Mr. Morton," replied the girl, in the same tone, grieved at the pain she was inflicting upon her lover, but at the same time glorying in the consciousness of her power. "You ought to be the best judge of that," she continued, "but it seems to me that you are wasting a great deal of valuable time in a very stupid place."

Morton grasped the oars with feverish haste and began to row with all his might, bending to his work with a desperate energy, as if trying to escape from some relentless vision which was pursuing him. He had foolishly misled himself, he thought, in regard to the nature of the girl's feelings, and he fancied that she had adopted that tone of formal courtesy to recall him to reason. He had met with his first repulse, and all his cherished hopes and glowing dreams seemed to be shattered by those few cold words, and the chilling manner in which they had been uttered. His face, just before so animated and happy, now became set and stern, and over it settled an expression of the deepest melancholy.

Miss Ellerton, frightened by the change in her lover, and really grieved at the pain she had so causelessly inflicted, began to ponder how she could best remove the effect which her heartless words had produced. She longed to smooth out those hard, set lines, and to make Morton smile again. She who before had so often played with the feelings of others had not realized the effect of her speech on this man, and now that those impulsive words had been uttered, she would have given worlds to have recalled them. But while she was wondering what she could do, a voice calling to them broke in upon the silence and made Morton pause from his desperate exertions and look round.

The voice proceeded from a boat which was lying directly in their course, unnoticed by Morton, who was absorbed in his own feelings. The boat was propelled by a small boy, who, frightened by their rapid approach, had abandoned his oars, and was standing up on the seat, gesticulating violently and calling out to them in a patois which they could not understand. A single stroke of Morton's oars sufficed to avoid a collision and bring his boat alongside the lad's, and he then saw that the latter was a young peasant who had been gathering some clusters of edelweiss, which he was anxious to sell. For the edelweiss, which abounds on the mountains near the lake, is highly prized by the Tyroleans, who delight in decorating their hats with bunches of this extraordinary flower. Morton took a bunch of the flowers from the boy without a word, and tossed it hastily into the bow of his boat. Then, having thrown back some pieces of silver in exchange, he separated the boats with a powerful shove, and again resuming his oars, continued silently pulling on his course until the opposite shore was reached and the boat's keel grated on the sands.

Morton simply gave his hand to Miss Ellerton, as she stepped lightly from the boat, and after she had safely landed he sprang ashore himself, and drew up the boat high and dry on the soft sand of the beach. As he did this the bunch of edelweiss

in the bow caught his eye. He took it up, and thoughtfully selecting one of the flowers, approached his companion, who was standing at some little distance from the water's edge.

"Miss Ellerton," said he, as he halted beside her, gazing earnestly into her face, "this edelweiss is like me. It has grown up in rugged solitude; living in the ice and snow uncared for and neglected, it has known nothing but coldness. Just so has my life passed without care and without love, alone among strangers. Will you take the edelweiss, Miss Ellerton, knowing it to be like me, or will you bid me throw it back again into the cold?"

Miss Ellerton looked up into Morton's face, her eyes dim with tears; then stretching out her hand for the flower, she said, softly: "I will take it, Mr. Morton, if you are willing to give it to me, and I will keep it always."

Morton reverentially took the little hand that was held out for the flower in both his own, and bending down his head until his lips touched it, he kissed it gently, and said, in a husky voice:—

"I love you, Miss Ellerton, with all my soul. Will you keep my love, too, as well as the little edelweiss?"

The girl's lips moved, though she did not speak, but as Morton's eyes sought hers he saw behind their mist of tears a look which told him that he,

too, was beloved, and it seemed to them both as if the mountains had closed down around them, and shutting out the world, had made for them there a Paradise, as they stood by the lake, with Morton's arms about her and his face pressed against hers.

"My darling," said Morton, at last breaking in upon the silence which to them had been like the awakening into a new life, "why can't I tell you how I love you, how I worship you! You are my heaven, my own, my Ellen! I may call you my Ellen now, may I not? My own dear Ellen?"

"Yes," replied the girl, softly yielding to the pressure of his arms, "I am your Ellen, all yours, if you will take me;" and Morton clasped her more closely to him, and their lips met for the first time.

In the half hour that followed, were discussed all the doubts and feelings of their short courtship, until at length Ellen, gently disengaging herself from her lover's arms, said:—

"We ought to go back now, or mamma will be anxious about us."

Morton acceded, and the lovers, as if by mutual consent, paused to take one last look at the spot where the destiny of their young lives had been decided; to engrave upon their memories each detail of what must forever be to them as hallowed ground.

Then Morton tenderly helped his betrothed into

the boat, and they were soon again floating upon the mirror-like surface of the lake.

"You dear little edelweiss!" said Ellen, apostrophizing the flower, while Morton rowed steadily, his eyes fixed upon the glowing and softened face before him, "you dear little edelweiss, how dearly I shall always love you! You who have brought me so much happiness!"

"But the resemblance has ceased," said Morton, "now that I am no longer alone. Now I have some one to care for me."

"But such a weak, unworthy little somebody! Do you know, I think I can never forgive myself for what I said as we came across?"

"You, darling," said Morton, insinuatingly, "you did not really mean that it was time for me to go, did you?"

"If you had taken me at my word and left me," replied the girl, passionately, "I believe it would have broken my heart. But some irresistible impulse urged me on."

"Don't think about it any more," said Morton. "Besides it answered a good purpose."

"I never can forget it!" said the girl; "but if I am ever tempted to act so again, the thought of this dear little edelweiss will bring me back to myself. I am glad that I have this tangible remembrance of to-day."

"Then the edelweiss will be promoted to the

rank of guardian angel. But now, dear, we are nearly back again. May I speak to Mr. Ellerton at once?"

"Yes," replied Ellen. "You tell him when you two are alone together. I shall take mamma aside and tell her everything myself."

"I am not afraid of Mr. Ellerton's answer," said Morton, suppressing certain doubts that were beginning to suggest themselves. "He must have known that I could not have been with you all these days without loving you."

"Papa likes you, I know," said the girl, confidently. "He has always said how noble and splendid you were."

"I never cared for flattery before," said Morton, smiling; "but now I know my own unworthiness so well that I prize it."

All things, no matter how ecstatic they may be, have their prescribed limits, and as a rule the more delightful the experience, the more closely drawn are the lines which bound it. So it was with this row, that it must come to an eventual end, for the lake is not half so wide as the lovers might have wished, and the grinding of the iron shoe of the boat's stem against the sands of the beach, reminded the lovers that dry land was reached, and recalled them back to thoughts of real life.

Mrs. Ellerton had come down to the water's edge to meet them, and from their altered manner

and conscious looks, she quickly divined what had happened, and guessed the result. But she kept her suspicions to herself, leaving it to their own discretion to choose the time for the disclosure of their secret.

Ellen sprang ashore as the boat grounded, and putting her arm around her mother, she led her away, knowing where to turn for sympathy in her new-found happiness ; while Morton, having fastened the boat, joined Mr. Ellerton in his quiet retreat beneath the trees.

As Morton had said, the girl's parents had long been aware of his preference for their daughter. Mr. Ellerton met his straightforward request with a kindness far beyond his fondest hopes, and they were talking about the future when Mrs. Ellerton and Ellen joined them, and after many felicitations and congratulations a very happy party sat down to their cold luncheon beneath the trees.

CHAPTER VII.

LATE one afternoon, a few days after the excursion to Achen See, Morton and Ellen were sitting in the little summer-house, in the garden, studying German, as they said; and others might have called it making love.

It is curious how lovers must have some ostensible occupation. Some say they read poetry, while others profess to study Greek, but I have never known any two young people, the engagement of whose affections has been announced to the public, who did not find in some book an unnecessary excuse for the time passed so exclusively in each other's society.

Such a volume usually has between its pages a book-mark, which I have been accustomed to regard as a sort of amormeter, or instrument for measuring love; for the slowness of its advance is usually in direct proportion to the extent of the lovers' infatuation with each other. In the present instance, the book-mark had advanced one page in three days, which would indicate the highest degree of infatuation.

Morton and Ellen were sitting very near each other, as is necessary when two people look over

the same volume, but as the book, which was a copy of Goethe's *Faust*, in German, had not as yet been opened, we may surmise that the lesson had not begun. Miss Ellerton was holding the volume in her lap, with her hands clasped over it, a position which served to display a handsome diamond engagement-ring which had been purchased in Innsbruck the day before. She looked very happy and coquettish as she sat there, and the cares of betrothal seemed to weigh lightly upon her.

Morton had acquainted Mr. Ellerton with the facts he knew in regard to his parentage, and the latter was forced to be satisfied with the uncertainty of his origin, although his explanation had put a different construction upon the question of his marriage. For Mr. Ellerton had always supposed Morton to be an orphan, and when he learned for the first time that his parents were living but unknown, the mystery of his birth suggests doubts to the father's mind, which made him regret that he had not enquired more particularly in regard to the young man's history, before he had allowed his intimacy with his daughter. But now that the young peoples' affections were already engaged, he felt that it was too late for regrets, notwithstanding his strong prejudices on this subject, and he suppressed the objections which presented themselves to his mind, feeling

that Ellen's happiness was at stake, and being unwilling to allow the slightest cloud to rest upon it.

Mr. Ellerton, proud of his own genealogy, was wont to lay great stress upon the ancestry of his acquaintances and friends, and Morton's want of family had been the source of serious trouble to him when the question of his marriage with Ellen was actually broached. But he had permitted his attentions to Ellen with open eyes, and it was now too late to make any objections on the score of his want of birth.

But after all there is much more in this matter of birth, than at first sight appears. Apart from the silliness and snobbishness of talking about the "nobility" of this or that American family, does not our knowledge of these families in general give us a means of judging about the character of one of its individuals in particular? Mr. Ellerton's family prided themselves upon their probity and high standard of honor, and Mr. Ellerton, other things being equal, would naturally have been better satisfied if he had known that his prospective son-in-law was descended from a family conspicuous for some virtue. In that case he would have assumed that Morton was possessed of this particular family virtue, until the contrary had been proved, for there can be no question that certain traits are characteristic of certain families. Does not the name of

Bach suggest music, for example, when we know that there were fifty composers of this name, all more or less distinguished? And is not the name of Borgia suggestive of crime, and should you like, dear reader, to have your only daughter marry a son of that infamous house? There were two Sheridans, two Coleridges, two Foxes, two Pitts, and history is replete with examples which prove the existence of inherited traits. A knowledge of any one's family is one of our best means of judging of the individuals of that family, and the absence of such a knowledge in Morton's case was a cause of deep regret to Mr. Ellerton. But regrets were unavailing, and he accepted him as his daughter's husband with the best grace he could, though it must be confessed that his brilliant qualities went a long distance in influencing a decision which might otherwise have been different.

But to the girl, this mystery of Morton's birth was a charm, involving her hero in romance. She continually thought about it, wondering if the mother had ever seen her child, and if so, how she could willingly remain unknown to a son of whom she had such reason to be proud.

So this afternoon, as they sat in the summer-house, in the garden, the conversation drifted round to the subject of Morton's family, about which they were conversing when our chapter

opens. Morton showed none of the reticence which he had displayed while talking with Lindsay, but spoke without reserve, telling the girl all he knew, and answering her questions with perfect freedom.

"I don't see," said Ellen, referring to his parents, "how you can endure not knowing about them. In your place, I should be thinking of them the whole time."

"Well," said Morton, slowly, "one reason is that I always have considered myself an orphan, until recently. Then I suddenly learn that my parents are living, but unwilling to recognize me. If they do not care for me, why should I care for them?"

"That is certainly a philosophical way of looking at it," replied his companion; "but why should they not care for their own child?"

"It is hard to tell," said Morton. "I have tried not to think about it, but of course I have done so more or less. The conclusion I have come to is that I must resemble some relative who caused them great sorrow, and that they sent me away so as not to see me continually."

"But," objected Ellen, "would that be sufficient reason for sending away a son, never to see him again?"

"It might be," replied Morton. "I can imagine that my grandfather or some uncle persecuted my

parents to such a degree that anything which reminded them of him made them miserable. Now perhaps I happened to resemble this ancestor so closely that they thought it wiser to send me away than to keep me with them, prejudiced against me as they naturally would be under such circumstances."

"Yes," said Ellen, thoughtfully, "it must be something like that. But still I wonder why you did not want to find out more particulars when you talked with Mr. Hamilton."

"I was curious," admitted Morton, "but I can't help feeling that it is probably better that I should be kept in ignorance, or else why should they have taken so much trouble to guard their secret? I know now that there is nothing which need influence my actions in any way. Mr. Hamilton repeatedly assured me of that, and I made particular enquiries on each subject that could possibly affect me. I know that my parents are well-to-do, worthy people; that I am one of their legal heirs, and that I have no reason to be ashamed of them. More than that I do not care to know. As far as you are concerned, I feel that it is better as it is, since now you cannot be humiliated by seeing them, as would necessarily be the case if they were of lower station than we are. Now you will have no new relations, and above all, no mother-in-law."

"No," said Ellen, laughing, "I shall never have any one on your side of the house to criticize my housekeeping."

"Do you reflect," said Morton, changing the subject, "that we shall have to go back to Boston in less than two months? My insurance case begins early in November. Shall you really be willing to leave your father and mother, and go home alone with me?"

It had been decided that Morton and Ellen should be married, in Paris, early in October. For Morton's business necessitated his early return to America, and as he could not tell when he could visit Europe again, and Mr. Ellerton's health did not justify an immediate return of the family, Morton had strenuously urged the necessity of an early marriage. Separation seemed out of the question to the lovers, and when at length Ellen herself had yielded to Morton's entreaties, her parents could urge no valid objections, although they would have preferred a longer engagement.

"You will have to be everything to me then," replied the girl: "mother, and father, and all! Now you mustn't do that," she continued, as Morton put his arm about her and kissed her. "Some one might see us. Besides, we ought to begin on Faust again."

Morton laughed, and took up the book.

"See!" he exclaimed, "we have only read thirty

lines! However, no one could blame us for finding our own affairs more interesting than Doctor Faust's."

"When did you write to Doctor Lindsley?" asked Ellen. "It must be nearly time for his answer."

"It is," said Morton. "I wrote to Mr. Hamilton and to him that eventful night."

"I wonder why Doctor Lindsley never liked me?" said Ellen, looking inquiringly at Morton.

"He does like you," replied Morton, with prevaricating loyalty. "He has always said you were the handsomest girl in Boston."

"He may think me handsome," said the girl, thoughtfully, "but he thinks me vain and frivolous, and does not like me a bit."

"Well," slowly admitted Morton, "I dare say he does think you conscious. But how can a girl be as beautiful as you are, and not be conscious of it?"

"Do you really think me handsome, in your innermost soul?" asked Ellen, looking at her lover coquettishly.

"I think you the most beautiful, the sweetest, and the best creature in all the world," said Morton, passionately.

"That's only because you love me," replied she, very seriously. "Really, I am not! I am neither handsome, nor sweet, nor good, but only

a vain thing, and very silly. Do you think you will really love me when you learn how foolish and weak and ignorant I am?"

"Don't try to depreciate my property," replied Morton. "You are mine now, and I won't have a word said against you. I am the unworthy one. A man is never as good as a woman."

"That may be," replied Ellen; "but then you are much better for a man than I am for a woman. However, I am going to try to learn a great deal, and be very wise and strong."

"Don't," said Morton, deprecatingly; "you are perfect as you are. I wouldn't have a thing changed. I shouldn't love you if you wrote women's rights articles, read Seneca, resisted every temptation, and were rigid and stiff. What a man loves in a woman is her weakness and softness. Take away these and you take away the woman, leaving behind an uncouth thing which is not quite a man."

"You just love your ideal Ellen: a very different person from the true one," said the girl, laughingly.

"No, I don't," protested Morton; "I just love *you*. I wish I was Briareus with a hundred arms, to put about you, and the Hydra with its hundred mouths, to kiss you."

"What a perfectly dreadful idea!" exclaimed the girl. "Then when you were cross you would

scold me with the hundred mouths, and perhaps scratch me with your eight hundred finger-nails, until I should wish myself a centipede, to run away from you with my hundred feet."

Morton laughed, and took up the book, saying:

"Only thirty lines in three days! No wonder we are degenerating! We really ought to begin to improve our minds."

"No," said Ellen: "you won't love me if I become literary. So you put Faust away for to-day, and recite me some poetry."

Morton, assenting to this suggestion, laid aside the book, and began, in a rich, mellow voice, to recite verses. He was fond of poetry, and his legal training had made his memory remarkably retentive. Having read widely, he had a rich store of material to draw from, and he repeated with readiness and enthusiasm.

He had just finished one of Campbell's love poems, when Ellen interrupted him, saying, —

"Why did you never write poetry yourself?"

"I have tried it," replied Morton; "but my own verses are so much like the styles of the authors I admire most, but so wretched in comparison, that I never had enthusiasm enough to go on. I never like to do anything and not have it a success."

"I shouldn't be a bit surprised if your verses were delicious," replied the girl, with enthusiasm. "But you are such an ambitious creature that you

would never be content to write anything inferior to Byron or Shakespeare."

A man may be complimented by men, but he only receives fulsome praise from women, and the girl's openly expressed and genuine admiration was a new experience to Morton, who must not be blamed if he liked what has before now turned wiser heads than his.

"I like to hear you say that," said he. "I know I don't deserve it, but it gives me new confidence to be looked up to and believed in by you. I do mean to make you proud of me. After all, half the battle in the struggle for success is in well-directed efforts. I could never have a greater inducement to work than the feeling that I was working for you. If a man does n't believe in himself, nobody else will believe in him, and the converse is equally true, that the more others believe in him the more he believes in himself. I want to make you proud of your choice."

"How ambitious you are," said she, looking at him admiringly. "I expect to be Mrs. President or Mrs. Governor one of these days."

"I am afraid you will be disappointed, if you do," replied Morton, smiling. "But I do mean to go into politics when I am rich enough, and do something in the world before I die."

And so these two young people talked about the future until the tea-bell summoned them to

their evening meal, and Morton, who had everything that a man could wish for, — wealth, a useful occupation, vigorous health, and woman's love, — indulged in his flights of fancy, and gazed upon the distant future as a vast battlefield upon which he should win happiness and renown. Not contented with what should have been enough for any man, and not satisfied with all the blessings which the bountiful present had bestowed upon him, with human greed he looked forward to the future, forgetful that we are not wholly what we make ourselves, but largely what our ancestors have made us. For as children inherit from their parents tendencies to physical deformity and disease, so do they inherit intellectual predispositions; and the passions of fear, envy, jealousy, and anger, all may be derived from our ancestors as surely as tendencies to taste, to genius, and to talent.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY MORTON and Ellen Ellerton were married, in Paris, early in October, the marriage ceremony being solemnized in the Episcopal chapel in the Faubourg St. Honoré. Lindsley, who had come on from Vienna for the occasion, officiated as Morton's best man, while Mr. Ellerton, with imposing grandeur, gave away the bride. But as there were no brides-maids, and but few guests, the wedding was very quiet.

A wedding in a foreign country, away from one's friends and relatives, is always sad. One misses the throng of happy guests and the merry-makings attendant upon what is generally considered an occasion of rejoicing; and then, too, nothing serves to distract the mind from the contemplation of the serious side of marriage like the consciousness of the attention and criticism of many pairs of eyes and the clatter and chatter of many tongues.

Another element which detracted from the gayety of Ellen Ellerton's wedding was the necessity that the bride must leave her parents in a foreign country, and return to her native land

alone with one whom, until recently, she had considered as but little more than a stranger.

The wedding was in the morning, and the bride was dressed in a simple traveling costume of dark blue. She looked very beautiful as she stood at Morton's side before the altar, and was perfectly calm and self-possessed while the clergyman pronounced the solemn and impressive words of the Church of England's marriage service.

Morton, on the contrary, was deeply moved, as if he realized the solemnity of the vows he was taking; and he promised to love, honor, and cherish forever the woman he now loved so well, in tones which were scarcely audible, and found no echo in the empty church.

For the service to him was a serious one, and his ideas of a husband's duties would probably have been pronounced foolishly exalted, according to the more liberal ideas of modern interpreters. From this day the happiness of another life must be his highest object. His own individual life henceforth must cease to be, and in the new relation formed this day by the conjunction of their two lives, the attainment of the greatest mutual good must be the object to be sought in common. Self must forever be eliminated; and Morton prayed for strength that he might be able to fulfil this highest of all moral obligations.

It was not so, however, with Ellen, who looked

upon the ceremony from a much more commonplace point of view. She was more deeply impressed by its conventional aspect, and her responses, clearly articulated, were distinctly heard by all present. She promised to love, honor, and obey him, and to forsake all others, living for him alone, more as if she were promising not to retail some gossip which was about to be confided to her, than as if she were taking upon herself those obligations which the strongest of us are scarcely able to fulfil in their broadest application.

Men may blame women for their lightness of purpose, and for their frivolity; but is it not true that their own encouragement aggravates these faults, and do they not put a premium on vanity and selfishness, by encouraging in the individual those very traits which they so loudly deprecate in the sex?

But, from the foregoing remarks, the reader should not infer that Ellen was deficient in "qualities of the heart," if I may be permitted to slander that patient and much abused organ by the use of this metaphorical expression. For the literal heart is so much more perfect than its metaphorical synonym, that it is insulted by the implied connection. It is muscular, while the other is nervous: it contracts and expands equally, subject to wise and unvarying laws, while the other is apt to contract too much, or to expand

unduly, subject to no laws, but the laws of caprice. It has regular channels into which it directs its contents, while its metaphorical synonym is often so ill-regulated, that it is subject to frequent outbursts, which, carrying everything before them, often end in swamping its possessor and victim in the pent up rush. The literal heart has valves which its metaphorical brother is sadly in need of, and, more important than all, when the literal one is forever still, its possessor ceases to live, while in the case of its metaphorical synonym, the body associated with it lives long after the last thrill of its metaphorical inhabitant has ceased to be felt.

But after this somewhat anatomical digression let me say, in justice to Ellen's character, that she was not more vain and selfish than are most young women who have been educated in the school of indolence, and who have been obliged to contend against the temptations to which the possessor of surpassing beauty is always exposed, in this modern society of ours. She had been praised, flattered, and sought after, and this had naturally made her vain and selfish. She craved admiration and she demanded it, and no matter in what circumstances she might be placed, she had learned to consider herself as the most important personage present, and to believe herself the cynosure of all eyes. The enjoyment of the moment, and the gratification of her pleasures, had

always been her first desire. She was facile and emotional, and, like a sapling, she was swayed by whatever wind might blow. But, in spite of all this, all her impulses were good, and she would never have consented to do a wrong thing, knowing it to be wrong.

She loved Morton with a passion as deep and as fervent as her nature was capable of ever experiencing, but if the woman's ideal of the obligations of matrimony was lower than the man's, and if she assumed these higher duties with a lightness which was not in accordance with the solemnity of the occasion, let us blame her education rather than its result, and let us regret that the culture of women looks more to the improvement and adornment of the body which nature has given her, than to the development of the faculties of the mind. We should not expect depth in the stream which we continually strive to make more shallow, nor should we expect a broadening of these faculties which the usages of society tend to contract.

After the ceremony was over, and our hero and heroine had been pronounced man and wife, Morton led his bride down the aisle, holding the little hand, that rested on his arm, pressed tightly against his side, with the feeling that he had everything that he could desire, and walking with the triumphant step of one who has been

crowned with the laurel. His ambitious dreams seemed suddenly dissipated, and life seemed to extend to him new promises of happiness in nowise connected with the attainment of greatness and political renown.

The bride and bridegroom, leaving the church, first drove to the hotel, where they were speedily joined by the girl's parents, Lindsley, and the few guests who had been present at the church, and all sat down to a wedding-breakfast, after the French fashion.

At length, however, the time for their departure arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Morton were constrained to say their last good-byes. Then with many tears on the part of the bride and her mother, amid a shower of rice, and a small hailstorm of fashionable French slippers, (whose high heels were suggestive of much stumbling,) this newly wedded pair started off on their wedding journey, — the beginning of their long journey through life together.

A good beginning and a happy one; but, alas! if there is any truth in the old proverb, a good beginning does not by any means necessarily imply the happiest result.

CHAPTER IX.

THE first two weeks of the honeymoon were spent in Brussels — weeks which were but too quickly added to the past, and at the expiration of which, the newly married couple returned to Paris, where they stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton during the brief time that still remained before their departure for Boston. During these two weeks, Ellen had become so absorbed in her husband, that parting from her parents was no longer regarded the terrible ordeal she had anticipated, and, when at length the time for the final separation had arrived, she had said her last farewell with surprising cheerfulness.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton returned to Boston, after an uneventful home journey, and settling down in the Ellerton's family mansion, they began their housekeeping under the most auspicious circumstances. For it had been arranged that the young people should occupy the family residence, a large house, on one of Boston's most fashionable streets, until a house of their own, Mr. Ellerton's wedding-gift to his daughter, should be completed for them. The Ellerton's house had been closed during the family's absence abroad, for Mr.

Ellerton would have as soon thought of renting the tomb of his ancestors in Mt. Auburn as the halls of his fathers on Beacon Hill; the thought that an uncongenial pair of lungs should breathe that sacred dust, would have been eminently distasteful to him, and would not have been contemplated for a moment, unless in some strait of dire necessity. But when we rejoin our hero and heroine, it was again reopened, and we find Morton and Ellen quietly ensconced in its aristocratic precincts, evidently perfectly happy in their new relationship. The days since their return had passed very quietly, without any incidents important to our story, so that when our chapter opens, it was already early in December.

Since his return to Boston, Morton had been so occupied by his professional engagements that he had far less leisure for himself than he could have desired under the existing circumstances. He was obliged to go to his office early in the morning, and could rarely return until their dinner-hour, at six. He had been retained as one of the counsel in the most important cause of the season, and as he knew that his legal reputation was largely dependent upon the issue of this suit, he felt that he could spare neither time nor thought for its careful preparation. But during the day his thoughts constantly

reverted to the young wife at home, and it seemed to him sufficient reward, after the day's work was done, to come home to the quiet dinner in the cheerful house, and to bask in the sunshine of his wife's presence.

Their evenings were always passed in each other's society, sometimes at the theatre or at a concert, or again by the wood fire in the solitude of their own parlor. At these times Morton would read aloud while Ellen busied herself over her embroideries, both seeming thoroughly contented with their quiet life.

In this way the month of November had slipped peacefully away, for November is never a gay month in the social world of Boston, since the few women of society who have returned to town are too busy with their preparations for the winter campaign in prospect, or too dilapidated after the excesses of the summer that is past, to be in a suitable state of mind for predatory excursions in search of gossip; and the unfortunate milliners and dressmakers must first be pursued and hunted down, before the female guerilla is in readiness to direct her attacks against her social compeers.

One evening in December, Morton hurried up the steps of his house, just as six o'clock was striking. Ellen had been watching for him at the parlor window, and she ran to open the door

for her husband, saying: "You are just in time for dinner. What makes you so late to-night?"

"The old story," replied Morton, kissing her: "Judge Porpus was late at his appointment, and we had a great deal of work to go over."

"Now you must run off and dress," said Ellen, as Morton took off his overcoat slowly, seemingly somewhat disposed to delay the operation of dressing for dinner. "You must go this instant, for dinner is nearly ready."

Morton hurried off to dress, an operation which evidently did not consume much thought with him, as he shortly reappeared just as dinner was announced, and the young couple proceeded sedately into the dining-room together.

The dinner was a somewhat elaborate affair, and the young people were waited upon by a well-trained English man-servant, who had been in the Ellerton family for many years. The conversation was somewhat constrained, as may be imagined under these circumstances, and Morton heaved a deep sigh of relief, when at length, the last course having been placed on the table, the man put a French coffee-making apparatus in front of Ellen, and noiselessly withdrew from the room. As the door closed behind him, Morton jumped up from his chair, saying, laughingly, —

"How absurd all this formality is!"

"Not at all," replied Ellen; "we must have

things done properly every day or the servants will become demoralized."

"What's the need of borrowing trouble?" asked Morton. "We never do have people to dinner, and I hope we never shall! Think how they would bore us!"

"I know it," replied Ellen, "but one can't live in the world and not see people."

"Now you make the coffee, my dear," said Morton, "while I smoke."

So saying, Morton lighted his cigar, and drew his chair up nearer his wife's, arranging a second in such a way as to serve for a foot-rest. Then settling himself down comfortably in an indolent manner, he began to smoke, a picture of perfect contentment.

"Now," said Morton, puffing at his cigar, having arranged himself to his evident satisfaction, and looking admiringly at Ellen, whose attention was completely absorbed in the management of the coffee-machine, "tell me what you have been doing all day."

"O, making calls, and receiving calls, and all sorts of things," said Ellen, still busy with the machine. "But who do you think has been to see me this afternoon?"

"I'm sure I can't guess," replied Morton. "Could it possibly have been the illustrious Flyaway? I saw by the paper that she had braved the homeward journey."

"Mrs. Flyaway has been to see me, but I did n't mean her. She was awfully enthusiastic about you, and said you were the most 'gentlemanlike young man' she had ever known."

"I'm much obliged to her for her good opinion," said Morton, laughing. "You see the result of compassion for the unfortunate. Probably nobody ever pitied her before."

"She would n't thank you for that speech," said Ellen, reprovingly. "She could talk of nothing but the new Worth dresses she has brought home, and the coming season. She means to give a ball this winter for Mary Morris."

"I'm sorry for that," replied Morton. "She had much better give her money to some charity."

"How you do dislike parties!" exclaimed Ellen. "Don't you ever want to see people?"

"Of course I do," replied Morton, "only I don't care to see them in that way."

"Then you will be sorry to hear that we are invited to a party at Mrs. Gale's."

"Why do you want to go to parties, dear?" asked Morton, seriously, sitting up in his chair.

"Are you not happy at home with me?"

"Of course I am," replied his wife; "but then I like to see other people, too, and to have fun like the other girls. Why, I don't believe Jessie Morrill sees her husband from one week's end to another. She is always going to the theatre or

driving with some man, and Joe Morrill spends all his time at the club."

"Why don't you call him Mr. Morrill?" asked Morton. "Has the pitcher been so often to the well that its handle is broken off?"

"No," replied Ellen, smiling. "But every one calls him Joe Morrill. If you spoke of *Mr.* Morrill, no one in our set would have the least idea whom you meant."

"That may be," replied Morton, "but it seems to me hardly worth while to sacrifice good-breeding because of the weakened intelligence of 'our set.' But," continued he, "if Morrill is willing that his wife should try to please every one except himself, that's his affair. I never could understand why he married her; but now that he has married her, I should think he might at least look after her."

"Nonsense," said Ellen, tossing her head very coquettishly; "you know perfectly well that Morrill just worships her, but that she doesn't care a bit about him."

"I hope you don't mean to follow her example, you mischievous creature."

"No," said Ellen, laughing, "I don't believe there is much danger of that; but, seriously, Mrs. Flyaway was speaking about this very subject. She advised me to give a few dinners and receptions, and go out as much as I could. She says

that it is the greatest mistake in the world for young married people to stay at home too much, and I must say that I agree with her. But you have n't guessed who came to see me this afternoon." Then she continued, disregarding Morton's former reproof: "It was Teddy Myles."

At this announcement Morton suddenly became grave, and looked at his wife seriously, for Mr. Theodore Myles was a man whom he extremely disliked. He had been a class-mate of Morton's at Cambridge, and they had always been in opposition to each other. They had been rival oarsmen, rivals in the college societies, rivals in class politics, and, later on, rivals in Boston society, and rumor said, rivals for the hand of Ellen Ellerton. Myles was a tall, muscular fellow, very rich, and a descendant of an old Boston family. He was a man who had seen much of the world, and he had acquired a certain amount of adaptability which passed for cleverness. But his brightness was only the surface polish which overlaid the dull and lustreless metal beneath, and was derived from contact with the world in much the same way that an apple in a street stall is polished by the application of the moistened brush of the fruit vendor. His conversation, like a rubber band, he could apply to almost any subject, but the more it was stretched the thinner it became. He was a man entirely without principle, and from being one of the fast-

est men in college he had developed into one of the most dissolute men about town; but his wealth, his family name, and ready conversation, had made him a most popular man in society, and his presence was universally sought after.

Morton hated him bitterly, not only because of the old rivalry and because of his low tastes, but also because Myles had on several occasions displayed a disposition to injure his reputation, disguising his insinuations so carefully, however, that Morton had been unable to resent them. Whether rumor spoke the truth in regard to Myles's sentiments towards Ellen or not he did not know, but he did know that Myles had been very attentive to her; and conscious of their old enmity, and knowing the character of the man, he recognized the fact that he was a most undesirable acquaintance for his wife. So he said, very seriously:—

“I hope you did n't encourage him to come here again.”

“Why, of course I did,” replied the girl; “he is very nice, and I like him.”

“Nice is the last adjective to apply to him,” said Morton, “and you ought not to like him. He is the worst man I know.”

“I do believe you are jealous, you silly old thing!” said Ellen, laughing. “But you need n't be, for he spoke very respectfully and admiringly of you.”

This remark naturally placed Morton at a disadvantage, for it is not agreeable to be told that any one thinks well of you, after you, on the contrary, have been pointing out his various weaknesses, and it chafed Morton all the more to think that the rebuke, in this instance, had been administered by his wife. Looking somewhat indignant, he was about to speak, when Ellen interrupted him by saying,—

“Now, don’t be cross, dear. I will never speak to him again, if you don’t want me to.”

“Of course, I don’t want you to be rude to him,” said Morton, deprecatingly; “only I think him a very objectionable man, and should be sorry to have you see much of him.” Then changing the subject somewhat abruptly, he asked: “Is that one of your Worth dresses?”

The dress in question was of black velvet, cut square at the throat, and set off the white round neck to great advantage.

“Yes,” said Ellen, “it is one of my trousseau dresses; how do you like it?”

“Very much,” said Morton, “but not so well as your red one.”

“How queer you are,” said the girl, laughing: “this is twice as handsome as that red dress, and cost three times as much. Why, this lace is the most expensive point. But you never like anything unless it is showy.”

"I do like vivid colors," admitted Morton, "and the brighter and more striking they are, the better I like them. You ought to have some scarlet flowers to set off the black."

"Nobody ever sends me any flowers now," soliloquized Ellen, in a pathetic voice, looking coquettishly at her husband.

"It is too bad of me," said Morton, "but another time I will not be so negligent."

"Now, let's go into the parlor," said Ellen, as Morton laid down his cigar; and the young people went into the adjoining room, and prepared themselves for the usual quiet evening. But they were soon interrupted by the advent of some callers. Misfortunes do not come singly, and so on this occasion, guest succeeded guest, and Morton found no opportunity to renew the conversation in regard to Myles. But he did not forget it, and the thought of a renewal of the attentions of this particular admirer made him serious and preoccupied, and was the first cloud which overshadowed his domestic happiness.

Chamfort has wisely remarked: "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of men." Is the end of wisdom the fear of women?

CHAPTER X.

THE visitors alluded to in the last chapter were a young newly married couple, the bride being one of Ellen's numerous "dearest friends." But it is not my intention to weary the reader with an accurate account of the conversation which ensued, for Morton literally discussed the affairs of the nation with his male guest, while the two girls were soon plunged in the intricacies of fashions, and the writer confesses his total inability to describe the dialogue between these young women, even had it seemed to him worthy of transcription.

A conversation at best is a very intricate matter, as The Autocrat at the Breakfast-Table has pointed out to his readers, showing how, in a dialogue between two men, six personalities are engaged. How difficult a task, then, it must be to describe a conversation between two women, when we have at least ten personalities, all talking at once.

Such a task could be undertaken only by the boldest and most self-confident, and the most adroit alone have succeeded in accomplishing it with any degree of success. Suffice it to say that

the callers paid their visit and took their departure, leaving a visiting-card in lieu of taking a receipt. They had paid their visit as they would have settled a bill, and the visit made was simply a debt discharged. In such a visit there can be no pleasure either to the debtor or creditor. It is merely that a bank on the verge of bankruptcy, so far at least as ideas go, has settled its balance at the clearing-house of fashion, and satisfied thus the demands of society. Theoretically, a visit ought to be given, not paid. The moment obligation is considered, pleasure ceases; for pleasure enters in, as etiquette flies out of the door, and the latter is usually so apt to linger about the threshold before taking its departure, that in these social exchanges as a rule it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

But the advent of these callers was the beginning of the long list of interruptions which was destined to break in upon Morton's idyl, and, in the weeks that followed, each succeeding day seemed to bring merely a repetition of the preceding day's gayeties.

At the same time the demands of Morton's business became greater and greater, obliging him to go to his office earlier in the morning and to stay away later in the evening, so that the dinner-hour had been pushed on to seven. The result of this change was that the young husband and wife

now seldom saw each other alone, since Morton left the house early in the morning before Ellen had come down stairs, and did not return until time for dinner; and the evening was consumed with balls or receptions, or in receiving visitors. In this way the formal dinner was the only hour in the day when the young people were alone together, and even this meagre consolation to Morton was beginning to be frequently encroached upon, either by the presence of guests at home, or by his own forced attendance upon the many dinner-parties to which they were invited. But, although he patiently acquiesced in the various engagements that Ellen made, he was beginning to find his present manner of living very unsatisfactory and irksome. He was constantly repining for the old *solitude à deux*; but he knew how much he had to occupy his own mind in the absorbing requirements of his profession, and he was unwilling to deprive his wife of the enjoyments she prized so highly. He tried to believe that it was as natural that Ellen should require some change after the monotony of her day, as that he should enjoy the quiet of an evening by his own fireside, after the bustle and excitement of his day down town; but, though he endeavored to blind himself with this sophistical reasoning, he was nevertheless perfectly well aware that the cases were not parallel, since, if he

had the society of others during the day, it was the society of his own sex, and this was a recourse which Ellen also enjoyed, in her daily round of visits among her female friends. But while this form of society was enough for Morton, who was so engrossed in his wife that he had no desire for the companionship of other women, it was by no means sufficient for Ellen, who absolutely required the attentions of men other than her husband: a taste which not only deprived Morton of his evening at home, but also prevented him from seeking the society of the only woman he cared to be with; so that Morton had slowly brought himself to believe that his wife preferred the bubbles of flattery which frothed from the lips of society to his own honest admiration and affection. But while he regretted that his wife's tastes should be such that her only amusements must necessarily separate her from him, he wisely made up his mind to endure this disappointment as best he might, trusting that in time Ellen would weary of this artificial life, and that this temporary cloud upon his happiness would pass away, making the newly appearing sunshine all the brighter for its brief withdrawal.

But in this he was mistaken, for Ellen had been a belle before her marriage, and had learned to consider social success as a woman's highest aim in life; and now that she was married, she not

only found society much more attractive than it had been when she was a *débutante*, but also saw that she herself had become a much more important personage in it. She soon perceived that, as a married woman, she was more sought out, and more admired, and that the admiration was more openly expressed, while the attentions which were now paid her were far more exclusive than they formerly had been. Thus society became more seductive than ever before; she was proud of her triumphs, and openly delighted in them, and if they absorbed the greater part of her thoughts, the reader will probably find many excuses for this fact while deploring the cause.

This gradual drawing apart of our hero and heroine had made its impression felt by several little reproachful scenes, in which Morton had accused his wife of a diminution of her affection for him. Then, too, added to the dissatisfaction which Morton felt for her manifest preference for the society of other men, there was the continuation of Mr. Theodore Myles's attentions, which had become more and more marked. He danced with her at all the parties, sent her flowers and bonbons, and called upon her every week, and this devotion on his part, furnished Morton with a particular cause for jealousy. Ellen knew that Morton objected to the attentions she received, but never understood his character well enough to

comprehend why he objected, and even if she had understood the intricacies and injustices of his strong passions, she could never have displayed sufficient tact to have removed the cause of what was evidently becoming a source of dissension between them. She would have been amazed if he had told her the little things, by which every evening, she roused his jealous anger, and how each careless word, or negligent glance, could wound him to the soul. For Morton's feelings had so worked upon him, that he regarded every kindness to another as an unkindness to himself, and each pleasure that Ellen enjoyed, he believed was simply enjoyed because she saw in its exercise that she held in her hands the power of wounding him.

In this way, Ellen and Morton were gradually becoming estranged from each other, and while Morton turned to his business for abstraction, Ellen sought society, thus widening the breach, which, to an observer, was slowly, but plainly, separating them.

One evening, shortly after the events of the last chapter, as Morton came home rather earlier than usual, he was disappointed in finding that Ellen was occupied in receiving a visitor. There was a *portière* before the door which led from the hall into the parlor, and as Morton paused in the hall to take off his overcoat, he recognized a man's voice in conversation with Ellen.

It had been one of those days with Morton in which everything seemed to go wrongly, and he had come home tired and irritable, hoping that a quiet half hour with his wife would conjure him back into a happier frame of mind. But, while taking off his coat, he heard the sound of laughter issuing from the next room, as if its occupants were mutually enjoying themselves.

There are times when laughter is contagious, and the sound of the merriment of others awakens in us an answering hilarity, while again, in other moods, another's laughter may jar terribly and causelessly against our feelings. The laugh in question excited Morton strangely, and losing his self-possession for an instant, he swore under his breath, cursing the visitor, and lamenting his fate, that every other man should have his claims upon Ellen's companionship preferred to his own. After a momentary pause, he proceeded up the stairs in an angry mood, leaving Ellen and her guest undisturbed in the parlor. The visitor seemed in no hurry to depart, and Morton had finished the operation of dressing, and had half persuaded himself into believing that he was the most ill-used being on earth, when at last the hall-door closed, and Ellen made her appearance.

"What a curse all this society is," said he, angrily, as Ellen came into the room. "I never see you alone now; and to-day, when I came home

early on purpose to talk with you, I could n't see you, simply because some other man condescended to think he would like to see you himself."

"I was so disappointed when I heard you come in," said Ellen, sympathetically: "I would have given anything in the world to have been alone."

"I thought you laughed as if you bore your disappointment pretty easily," remarked Morton, sneeringly. "I can't see why you are willing to let your infatuation for society destroy all our domestic happiness."

"I don't," said Ellen, looking unhappy; "this is the first time this week that I have n't opened the door when you came home."

"Well," said Morton, "I won't come home so early another time, if you object. But you must confess that it is hard that a man never can get a chance to speak with his own wife, just because some other man happens to want the same thing."

"Now, please don't be cross," said Ellen. "You know that it is almost dinner-time, and I do love you dearly."

So the quarrel was smoothed over, but not forgotten, and the two went down stairs amicably together, though Morton was still irritable in his mind, and the cause of contention was not removed.

"What do you say to staying at home to-night?" asked he, as they sat alone together after

dinner, "and having a quiet evening by ourselves?"

"O, I can't," said Ellen. "I am engaged for the german."

"Of course," replied Morton. "Some man who has nothing better to do than to go about dancing with other people's wives, is, of course, preferred."

"How unjust you are," exclaimed Ellen, petulantly. "You know that if I go about at all I must do as the other girls do."

"I don't see any pressing need that you should go out at all," said Morton, sarcastically.

"But I like to," replied his wife. "I like it better than anything I know of, and one must do some things one likes."

"If you like going to parties, and dancing with other men better than you like staying at home with me, why then go by all means," said Morton; "but I can't help being sorry that such is the case."

"I do like it awfully," replied the girl, "and I always do have such a good time. Why, I have had four bouquets sent me to-day! I don't see why you can't enjoy my little triumphs, too."

"Because they are not good triumphs," replied Morton, seriously. "Because the more attention you receive, the more encouragement you must have given to obtain it, and this encouragement means a failure in your duty as a wife. Then, too,

the more attention you receive, the vainer and more self-indulgent you become; and the more you exalt self, the less you are able to care for any one else; no woman can live for her own personal enjoyment, and still devote a proper proportion of her thoughts to others."

"How absurd!" said Ellen. "Do you mean to say that every married woman who goes to parties is an unfaithful wife?"

"No," said Morton. "I don't say anything of the sort. I say that any married woman who is a belle, who dances, flirts, and encourages men to flatter her and to admire her, and who shows them that she likes it, does what, in my opinion, is a wrong to her husband; and if she does more than that, and permits men to make love to her, she is an unfaithful wife, and a bad woman."

"But," objected Ellen, "a girl can't take offence at every little silly thing a man may say to her."

"No," said Morton, "a *girl* need not. But is it not time you put away girlish things, and became a woman? The moment a man says to a wife what he would not dare to say in her husband's presence, she ought never to receive his attentions again. Ellen, do you think I could ever say anything to another woman, that I should be unwilling to have you hear?"

"No, dear; I don't believe you could."

"Then can you not understand how I feel when

I know men say all sorts of things to you that they never would dare to say in my presence? Can you not imagine how I feel when I see a man trying to steal the one thing I prize most on earth, your affection? Oh! Ellen, I wish you would give up this going to parties, not as a sacrifice for my sake, but because you see that it is wrong for you, when you know that it destroys all the happiness of our home."

"I have always said that I was not good enough for you," said Ellen; "but I do like going to parties, and I don't see why we shouldn't have our home happiness and our parties too. You certainly don't think party-going is wicked, do you?"

"No," answered Morton, somewhat mollified at this unwonted deference to his opinion: "not if you go in the way I say, and do not permit the men to say things that I should not hear,—not if I can overcome my feelings."

"Well," said Ellen, "I will try, and you must try, too. Don't make me give it up, because I do like it so much."

"No," replied Morton, seriously, "I shall never *make* you do anything. I may ask you, but there shall never be any compulsion between you and me. You must try to be not so exclusive, and I will try to conquer my feelings. Considering what a pure creature you are in heart, I wonder that I should mind it so much, but the more attention

you receive, the more unhappy it makes me. If I can't overcome my feelings we shall have to give it up, or I fear the consequences."

"If you would only talk and dance with the other girls you wouldn't mind about me," said Ellen, persuasively. "Instead of that, you just talk with the matrons, and mope, and hang about, and then there's no wonder you're dreary."

"The reason is," replied Morton, caressingly, "that there is only one girl in the world I care to be with, and the more I go to parties, the less I see of her."

"I suppose I ought to consider that flattering," said Ellen; "but sometimes I wish you were more like other girl's husbands. I can't help thinking that things would go more smoothly with us, if you were."

"Oh! Ellen," said Morton. "Do you really wish that your husband loved you less?"

"I don't call it love," said Ellen. "It's simply jealousy. I love you better than any one in all the world, but still I like to see other people, too. It is simply jealousy, and you ought to conquer it."

"Well," said Morton, "it certainly is jealousy, but jealousy comes from love, and sometimes ends in hate. We must take care that mine does not lead to any lasting unhappiness between us. As it is, all this whirl of society makes me unhappy,

but I will try and get over it for your sake. Now, to change the subject, I had a letter from Lindsley to-day. He sails for home next week."

And so the conversation drifted into new channels, and Ellen and Morton seemed to imagine that they had found a satisfactory solution to their difficulties, neither realizing that, of all the passions, jealousy and its attendant revenge are the most unreasoning and unreasonable feelings of the human mind, and that being thus unreasoning, they more often lead to desperate results. Revenge and jealousy are brutish qualities which we derive from our more uncivilized ancestors; and they lead to the commission of savage acts, or not, according to the ascendancy they may attain over the reasoning faculty, which enables us to resist their prompting.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Lindsley returned to Boston, his mind was absorbed by the great question as to where he should locate himself, and the amount of anxious thought that the young man lavished upon this subject would seem incredible to an unprofessional man. If Lindsley had been chosen an arbitrator in the Alabama Claims, he could not have investigated the subject more thoroughly than he had studied this apparently unimportant one.

At first there was the question as to the relative merits of country practice and city practice. Then, having decided upon the latter, his next dilemma was in regard to which part of the city he should establish himself. After weighing all the pros and cons of this important question, he decided to follow the advice which the professor gave to the young doctor: namely, "to go in for the swell fronts and south exposures," and with this object in view he selected an office in the same neighborhood in which he had always lived, and put forth his modest signs. I say *signs*, because he not only had the board which the young physician usually denominates as his shingle, but also a sign, neatly painted on glass, so placed in

the window as to attract the attention of the passer-by, when unfriendly darkness should obscure the former from view.

He had, moreover, a professional looking night-bell, which gladdened his heart whenever he ran up the steps of the house, notwithstanding that it served to remind him of the melancholy fact that hitherto it had never been rung. Connected with his chamber was a speaking-tube, which had never known the sound of the human voice, except on that one occasion when a wag had awakened him in the middle of the night, by saying, —

“Is the doctor in?”

“Yes,” cried Lindsley, who in breathless haste had bounded from his bed.

“Well, I guess he’s likely to stay in,” was roared back through the tube, and Lindsley heard a loud laugh and the clatter of footsteps hurrying down the street, as he returned to his pillow and composed himself to sleep, lamenting the lot of the young physician.

After he was duly established in his new office, which he had arranged to his complete satisfaction, setting forth a formidable array of fearful looking instruments upon his shelves, and lining his book-cases with ponderous volumes, whose unpleasantly suggestive titles stared at the chance visitor, reminding him painfully of the mortality of man; after he had decorated his walls with several of

those ghastly engravings which seem to strike a chord of sympathy in the mind of the young doctor, Lindsley settled himself down to the contemplation of the next great problem which now presented itself to his mind: namely, how he should occupy his time; for he did not expect that patients would flock to his office in sufficient numbers to afford him constant occupation, and if he had deluded himself by fictitious hopes of this nature, the first two weeks of his practice would have speedily convinced him of the groundlessness of such aspirations, since during that time he had written but one prescription, and that for a waif, who had been singularly reticent in regard to the doctor's fee, a subject of conversation which Lindsley, with some delicacy, had refrained from suggesting.

But this question was fortunately settled for him by the offer of a position in a charitable society which provided medical attendance to the sick poor in their own homes, an offer which he gladly accepted, and he soon found that this position afforded him abundant opportunity for plenty of hard work, and would supply him with just that experience which would be of value to him when the city nabobs should summon him to their aid; for the pain which agonizes the laborer after the free indulgence in corned-beef and cabbage, is similar in nature and degree to that which

disturbs the equanimity of the alderman who has partaken indiscreetly of mayonnaise of lobster at the city's expense, and an irritable heart is an irritable heart, whether it is produced by an Irishman's clay pipe, or by the most highly flavored of Havana cigars. He soon found that his practice was as large, in the number of patients, as that of the most fashionable physician in the city, though it certainly was not a lucrative one; but he consoled himself by the thought that he was gaining experience, and he ignored the question of remuneration, perfectly satisfied with an abundance of occupation. But to a refined and sensitive physician the practice of medicine among the extreme poor, those who are destitute of the most ordinary comforts of life, entails more that is painful to contemplate than practice amongst the rich; and Lindsley, in spite of his high spirits and cheerful disposition, saw many sights which made him thoughtful and serious, so that when his day's work was done he was glad to turn to society, to divert his mind from the anxieties which the practice of his profession involved. In this way he met the Mortons constantly, and he was not long in discovering that all was not as it should be between them. He was grieved to observe how unhappy and melancholy his friend was fast becoming, and felt hurt that he did not confide in him and seek his advice, as had been his custom in the old days before his marriage.

He was disappointed, too, in his friend. For, seeing how much Morton had to make him happy, he could not understand his melancholy and discontent; and in comparing him with his poor patients, with their burdens of bodily ills, he thought the contrast was unfavorable to his friend, not recognizing the fact that the mere physical pain and hardship of the ignorant do not involve a fractional part of the suffering which is so often endured by those possessed of more highly organized minds which are seemingly in perfect health.

On the evening of Mrs. Flyaway's ball, Lindsley, who had arrived early, was standing in a doorway, surveying the crowd, with an expression of interest and amusement on his face, when Morton and his wife entered the room, and paused to pay their respects to the hostess, who stood in full war-paint, to receive her guests. Mrs. Flyaway's dress was cut extremely low in the neck, and served to display an undue amount of her attenuated figure. Her prominent clavicles loomed up in the shadows of her cartilaginous throat, as if sluice-gates of the stream of small talk which flowed from the lips above. Mrs. Flyaway was so thin that it was a constant source of amazement to her friends, that her joints did not become disarticulated in her ungraceful struggles with the waltz.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton had come rather late, and

the rooms were crowded as they entered; but there was a distinct pause in the buzz of conversation, when the young couple appeared, and a general hum of approbation, which was certainly merited, as one seldom finds an opportunity to look upon two such handsome people together.

Mrs. Flyaway received the young couple with a beaming smile, a favor which they should have highly prized, judging from the amount of labor the good lady had lavished upon the perfection of this masterly grimace.

For that smile was not, as at first sight it appeared, the vulgar expression of spontaneous delight. On the contrary, it was a work of art, as carefully elaborated as the work of some ancient master. It was a volitional process, gradually brought to its present state of perfection by arduous practice before her long plate-glass mirror, and it was regulated to display just so much of her delicate, white teeth, as could be exposed to view without causing their displacement from her alveolar processes; for Mrs. Flyaway's pearly incisors were literally pearls of great price, having been purchased from a fashionable dentist, at a high figure.

Morton and Ellen accepted this mark of Mrs. Flyaway's approval with due complacency, and after a few commonplace remarks, and much forced laughter between the ladies, they resigned

the place near their hostess and passed on, thus making room for the other guests who were constantly arriving. Ellen looked wonderfully beautiful as she walked gracefully through the rooms, leaning on her husband's arm, smiling at at her various acquaintances, and pausing every now and then to address some more favored friend. She seemed in her element: one especially created for social distinction.

Morton stood beside her as they paused after their short tour of inspection, and they talked constrainedly together for a few moments, when they were joined by one of Ellen's numerous admirers. With this young man, whose tender years suggested bedtime rather than the ball-room, Morton left his wife, and made his way across the room to Lindsley who was still standing among the group of men clustered in the doorway where they could most effectually block the entrance to the parlors and could be in instant readiness when supper was announced.

"It's an amusing scene, isn't it?" asked Lindsley, disregarding the contemptuous expression on his friend's face, as he looked with real interest at the various groups about him.

"Yes," replied Morton, with a sneer. "But a clown's antics in a circus are amusing, though I confess I should not care to be a clown."

"An invidious comparison," laughed Lindsley;

"but then you are not fond of society, whereas I like it. One has to make just effort enough to talk fairly well and still he need not exert himself enough to tire him. In this way it seems to me that society is the best recreation you can find."

"To make it recreation one must enjoy it, but I don't care for small talk, and if I wanted to talk seriously, a woman of society would be the last companion I should choose, and a noisy ball room the last place for such a conversation."

"Why do you go to parties, if you don't like them?" asked Lindsley.

"Because Ellen likes to go, and I don't like her to go without me."

"That's it," said Lindsley, maliciously. "Mr. Morton likes to stay at home, but Mrs. Morton likes to go out, and so Mr. Morton sacrifices his own pleasures to secure his wife's, yet we are told that marriage entails a series of cheerful sacrifices on both sides! I am going to speak to that girl in red." So saying, Lindsley left his friend and slowly strolled across the room, negligently dangling his opera hat in his left hand; while Morton was accosted by an elderly gentleman, who had been standing behind him, an amused listener to the conversation of the two friends.

"Good-evening," said he, putting his hand on Morton's shoulder, and elbowing his way among

the group of men who were standing between him and Morton. "This is a curious place of meeting for two grim lawyers!"

"Ah!" said Morton, turning round, and a look of interest at the same time lighting up his face, displacing the settled expression of discontent which had distinguished him of late. "Is that you? How do you happen to be seen in such frivolous company?"

"My wife is ill," replied Judge Porpus, for such was the name of the elderly gentleman, "and so I had to bring my eldest daughter myself. At first I felt like a cat in a strange garret, but when I saw you, I was glad I came, for I want to speak to you in regard to a new feature of our case. But can't we get out of this fearful din? I should like to sentence those musicians for contempt of court."

During the Judge's remarks the band had struck up a waltz, and as the musicians were stationed very near Morton and Judge Porpus, the two gentlemen could hardly hear the sound of their own voices.

"Yes," replied Morton, who was well acquainted with Mrs. Flyaway's house, "there is a little room out of the next parlor, where I don't believe we shall hear the music at all."

Judge Porpus took Morton's arm, and the two men, having steered their way through the pairs

of dancers who were revolving about the room in a manner that might have suggested a series of syzygies between pairs of planets, were it not that they were far from being heavenly bodies, in most instances, and could not, by any force of the imagination be supposed to revolve in space — having at length emerged from this maze of whirling fellow-creatures, they entered the adjoining room, which was packed with groups of guests, all talking and laughing at the same time, and was only less crowded and noisy than the room they had just left, in which the human tops were spinning.

Morton successfully piloted the Judge through this second maelstrom, and led him to an exquisite portière which was hung before the room they were in search of. Here the two gentlemen paused, and Judge Porpus took advantage of this temporary quiet, to wipe away the beads of perspiration, which had gathered upon his forehead, from his unwonted exertions.

“God bless my soul!” he breathlessly exclaimed, “I feel as if I had been fighting Scylla and Charybdis! Those people are twice as noisy and rude as an Irish mob, and harder to pass than Greek verbs. No wonder that my daughters sharpen their nails to points, if this is the sort of society they frequent!”

Morton laughed at the Judge’s outburst, and

drawing aside the portière slightly, he replied: "Well, we've reached our haven at last. Here, I fancy, we shall be out of the hurly-burly, and free from interruption."

Judge Porpus took a step forward, about to enter, when suddenly drawing back, he winked significantly at Morton, who was standing behind the portière in such a way as to be unable to look into the room, and motioned to him to let the portière fall, saying, in a whisper, —

"There are too young lovers in there, and it's a shame to disturb them. The girl's a beauty, and complete mistress of the situation. Take a peep, and we'll go away."

Morton's curiosity got the better of him, and drawing aside the edge of the curtain, he looked into the room, when he saw a picture which, after the Judge's remark, made his blood boil. For there, sitting on a sofa toying with her fan, with eyes coquettishly directed towards the floor, was Ellen, while beside her was Mr. Theodore Myles, who, gazing steadily at her, was talking earnestly, in a low voice, with an expression of undisguised love and admiration on his face.

Morton stood for a moment, perfectly motionless, gazing at the pair with dilated eyes, and his face assumed that peculiar expression of ferocity, already mentioned, in a degree so marked that his companion could not fail to notice it.

"Who is the lady?" asked the Judge. "It is a face I should never forget," he added, thinking he had seen that in Morton's face, which he should remember long after the girl's beauty was forgotten. The Judge's question seemed to recall Morton to himself. With an evident effort, he glanced about the room, and seeing that several of the guests were looking at him, replied, with admirable composure:—

"It is my wife, and one of my old college friends. Come in, and I will introduce you."

So saying, he lifted the portière, and entered the room, his companion very reluctantly following him. Myles looked up, angry at the interruption, but when he recognized Morton he rose hurriedly from his seat, and braced himself like one preparing for a scene, though he stood in perfect silence, looking at Morton, as if waiting to know if it was to be peace or war between them.

Morton did not keep him long in suspense, for he strode up to the sofa, and said, disdainfully:—

"How are you, Myles?" Then, without waiting for a reply, he turned to his wife, and said:—

"Ellen, I want to present to you my friend, Judge Porpus."

The girl had glanced upward as Morton entered, and had recognized her husband, without the least embarrassment or change of color. She smiled very cordially at Judge Porpus, as Morton pre-

sented him to her, and 'received him without the slightest confusion of manner. But the Judge, on the contrary, remembering his unlucky remark to Morton, was so confused that he could hardly stammer through the few necessary common-places, and he blushed and blundered like a school boy caught in a lie. The scene was fast becoming an embarrassing one to all, when Morton, desirous of putting an end to it, interrupted one of the Judge's involved sentences, and said:—

“Now, Ellen, Judge Porpus and I have some law matters of the greatest importance to discuss. Should you mind letting us have this room to ourselves?”

“Come, Mr. Myles,” said Ellen, gayly, rising from her seat, “let us take our dismissal with good grace.” Then gathering up her flowers, she smiled sweetly at her husband and the Judge, and taking Mr. Myles's arm, she left the room, and the two lawyers in it to their own devices.

“Morton,” said Judge Porpus, as the last ruffle of Ellen's train disappeared from view, “I beg your pardon for what I said just now.”

“You need n't,” said Morton. “I dare say I should have thought the same thing in your place. But society is different nowadays. If you take your daughter about much more you won't be surprised at anything. Now we can talk quietly over our business.” And the two lawyers

were soon plunged into an earnest conversation, though neither forgot the Judge's remark, nor the scene which had given rise to it.

"Society may be different nowadays," thought Judge Porpus to himself, as he drove home that night, "but if ever I saw murder in a man's eye, I saw it in Morton's. He may be a handsome man, but I thought he looked more like a wild beast, as he stood by that curtain. I must warn that little wife of his to be more careful, for Morton is too fine a fellow to be brought up with a sharp turn."

CHAPTER XII.

MORTON drove home that night in a desperate and dangerous mood, sitting back in his corner of the carriage, with his head resting against the cushions. A tumult of wild thoughts was rushing through his mind, and he did not attempt any of those demonstrations of affection which had been customary with him on former occasions when the evening gayeties were done.

He did not believe that his wife had been guilty of anything seriously wrong, but nevertheless what had happened had been a tremendous shock to one of his jealous disposition. He had been deeply humiliated by the Judge's remark, and fancying that other people must have been remarking the same thing, he wondered at his own blindness and apparent lack of spirit in permitting his wife to treat him with such contempt. For he argued that Ellen's tolerance of Myles's devotion was equivalent to an admission that he himself was incapable of retaining her affections.

He replied in monosyllables to Ellen's cheerful remarks as they drove rapidly homeward, until at length she noticed his taciturnity, and believing that he must be unusually tired, relinquished,

after one or two fruitless efforts, all attempts at conversation.

The fact that Ellen did not remember the affair in the little room, or if she did recollect it, did not consider it worthy of mention, instead of quieting Morton's mind, as it would have done in a person of a different temperament, had the reverse effect of rousing his anger to a still higher pitch, because in his fevered imagination he believed that her attempts at conversation were intended as a means of avoiding all mention of the subject that he was burning to discuss.

He did not realize that the affair which seemed to him so important, having been exaggerated by the Judge's speech, might appear as a very trivial occurrence to the girl. He merely recalled the feelings that the scene had aroused in him, and he was conscious that he had been guilty of a dream of murder, as he had looked through the doorway. And afterwards, when he gave license to his thoughts, the scene recurred to his mind with increased intensity, and he conjured up pictures and scenes of violence, gloating over ideas of revenge, until he worked himself into a frame of mind which was truly dangerous.

It would have been far better for the young people if Morton had quietly let the matter rest until the next day, and then had calmly discussed it with his wife, as indeed he had first intended,

and explained to her in what a humiliating light such scenes must make him appear, not to mention the unhappiness they caused him. A short deliberation would have done much towards lessening the importance of the occurrence which now seemed to him of so serious a nature.

But during the drive home Ellen's open enjoyment of the pleasure, which seemed to him identical with his own degradation, had goaded him to fury, as the spear of the matador rouses the bull; and when they arrived at their house, he was capable of almost any harshness. He determined to come to a definite understanding with his wife, and to peremptorily insist upon a discontinuance of her flirtation with Myles.

When the carriage had come to a stand before the house, Morton silently opened the door with his latch-key, and stood aside for Ellen to pass. But when she had entered the hall he gave way to the violence of his anger, and slammed the door with all his force. The crash of the glass, broken by the concussion of the heavy door, brought Morton to his senses, while it frightened Ellen, who, all unconscious of her husband's anger, was already on her way up stairs. She took one or two hasty steps, and then pausing, she turned and looked down at him, and said, in deprecating and pleading tones:—

“Now please don't be cross. Please don't spoil all the pleasure of the evening by scolding me.”

The frightened look and plaintive tones on any other occasion would have completely disarmed Morton's anger. But now he was too deeply roused to be calmed in a moment, and he replied, sternly:—

"You have acted as no woman can act, and still retain her husband's affection. The time has now come when you must choose between others and me. You can't have both."

"I am so tired I can hardly stand, and I don't see how you can treat me as you do. You know that I love you."

"I don't know anything of the kind," replied Morton, bitterly. "If you loved me you could not have humiliated me as you did to-night. Make your choice, and let me know the result. I don't care what you do."

And Morton, turning away, walked noisily into the dining-room, where he lighted a cigar and began to smoke, while Ellen, thoroughly disheartened and perplexed, sat herself down upon the stairs, a disorderly mass of satin, lace, and flowers, and began to weep.

Morton heard her sobs, and as they became more and more convulsive he was somewhat mollified by their sound, and regretted his hasty words. If a woman only realized the effect her tears may have over a man's passion and consequent acts, what a safeguard she would always

have in times of emergency, provided, however, that her weapon of defence was not blunted, as is so often the case, by too frequent use. Morton was not accustomed to the sound of woman's weeping, and the effect of Ellen's sobs was magical. He walked to the foot of the stairs, and said, in a softer voice: —

“Don't cry, Ellen. Go to bed, and we will talk about this in the morning. You will make yourself ill, if you cry any more.”

Ellen now held the key to the position, and the battle would have been hers, had she directed her next attack in the most approved way. But she, too, was proud, and was angry at being discovered in tears. At the sound of her husband's voice, she stifled her sobs, and rose hastily from her seat, gathering up her scattered finery. Then turning her back haughtily on Morton, she began to ascend the stairs without vouchsafing a word in reply to his conciliatory speech.

All bodies normally tend to a state of equilibrium, and so do most minds; and Morton, thoroughly perplexed, returned to the dining-room and his cigar, and settled himself down to collect his thoughts and calmly review the situation. Although no longer angry, still he did not feel very kindly toward his wife, but in spite of his resentment, he tried to think dispassionately over their difficulties and to

decide upon his course of action. The simplest solution to the problem seemed to him, that Ellen should give up society altogether, but this he knew she would not do of her own accord, and he was unwilling to require it of her, because it seemed to constitute her greatest pleasure; besides which, it would involve his demanding a sacrifice on her part, which he was too proud to ask. After considering the subject in all its aspects, he finally decided that it was Ellen's duty to put an end to the flirtation with Myles, promise to avoid the possibility of any more scenes like that of the evening, and to cease receiving the exclusive and devoted attention of other men. And he resolved that he, on his side, should try to cultivate an interest in society, and to overcome his jealousy. Having arrived at this conclusion, he threw aside his cigar, and proceeded up stairs, hoping, not only that the whole quarrel would be happily made up, as all their previous ones had been, but also that the result would be a more satisfactory condition of affairs.

But instead of finding the tender and penitent wife he had expected, waiting to receive him, he found Ellen in such a mood as he had never before experienced. She, too, had been thinking over the affairs of the evening. But not having had the benefit of Judge Porpus's opinion, nor having known of his remarks, she set down Mor-

ton's unprovoked violence and rudeness as simply due to his inordinate jealousy and suspicion. She was tired, and angry at being suspected of what she thought she was innocent, and when Morton entered the room, he found her in a defiant and disdainful mood. At his first attempt at a renewal of the conversation, she said, haughtily : —

“ I advise you not to say anything more about that eternal subject. You are so obstinate and exacting that an angel couldn't get along comfortably with you. If you ever want me to love you again, you had better try to make me. Instead of that, you have been so reproachful and cross lately, that you drive me to acting as I do. If this continual quarreling goes on much longer, I won't answer for the consequences.”

Morton suppressed the angry retort which flew to his lips, and speaking very deliberately he repeated Judge Porpus's remarks, and concluded by saying, though in by no means the most conciliatory tones, —

“ Now what I demand of you is this: that you put an end to this silly flirtation with Myles at once. You know that I hate the man, and that it is an insult to me for you to receive his attentions as you do. Then you must try to give up your manner of encouraging men to devote themselves to you. If you will make these sacrifices for my sake, I will relinquish the pleasure I derive from

staying at home, I will try to be less jealous, and we will continue going about together. I think that this is a fair bargain."

"It may be fair," said Ellen, "but I won't consent to be dictated to in this way. If you do not care to go out, nobody requires it of you. I can go by myself, and I should prefer to go alone, as other girls do, rather than to have you watching me like a detective."

"You gave me the right to dictate, when you promised to obey me," said Morton, sternly; "but until now, I never believed there could ever be a necessity of my exercising such a right. I don't know what Myles said to you, and I don't want to know. But I will leave it to your own conscience, if you can call a scene like that of this evening exactly 'forsaking all others and keeping only unto me.'"

"I don't care to talk with you about that," replied Ellen. "Your ideas on that subject are simply idiotic. You are so jealous and exacting that you are becoming perfectly unbearable, and I shall not consent to encourage you by granting a single thing that you demand."

"Very well," replied Morton. "Then you may make your own choice, but I warn you, if you provoke me much more, you will drive me to doing something desperate."

"I should think you would be ashamed to

threaten a woman," said Ellen, scornfully. "Now do go and leave me alone. I am thoroughly tired of the sound of your voice."

"Good-night," said Morton. "This is the last attempt that I shall make at reconciliation. The next concession must come from you. If you can get along without me, I fancy that I shall be able to exist without you, but of our two methods of existence, I am afraid mine will be the more honorable one."

"No doubt," said Ellen, sarcastically; "everything that you do must be right, of course, even breaking the front door! I only wonder that you don't tire of your own perfection."

Morton was silent for a moment, and then he replied, thoughtfully, as if to himself:—

"Ah! me. Men and women are very like pincushions, after all. Some are quickly worn out, while others answer the purposes of existence for a half century perhaps, before a rent develops, through which the sands of life may run out. A half century of life, devoted for the most part, to receiving those little thrusts and stabs which human ingenuity is so skilful in inflicting, while now and then one exceptionally deep, penetrates further than the others, and disappearing from sight, lies buried in the innermost recesses. Did you ever cut open an old pincushion, Ellen, and see how many needles and pins will lie concealed

under its faded cover, and some dull and rusty, and some sharp and bright?"

"No," replied Ellen, scornfully, "I never did. I leave that sort of thing to my maid, or to the ash-men." Then, seeing how her answer had offended Morton, she was about to make some effort at conciliation; but before she could reply, Morton turned sadly away and left the room.

"Alas, alas! for our modern degeneracy!" thought he to himself, deceived by his false estimate of Ellen's conduct. "Can the old Puritan blood have become so thin that we raise up such daughters as these? Is it possible that our American society is becoming *Europeanized*, as has been said, and that our ball-rooms are *graced* by women who secretly prefer their own husbands, however well they may conceal their preference, to the crowds of adorers who flock in their glittering trains, but who, in spite of this preference, are willing to strive and coquet for the *éclat* of dishonor? They do not mean to be wicked: they are too cold and judicious for that; they may lose too much by actual sin. They simply wish to be talked about, to be envied and admired by their compeers. And what higher honor can a woman dream of than to have the irresistible Chesterfield at her feet? Crime she may never be guilty of; but this is due to expediency rather than to virtue. Sin is a last resort to fall back

upon when beauty has faded and money fails. It is a poor whist-player who leads out his highest trump first—later in the game he may need it. But we are indeed degenerate, when a man may guard everything dear to him except the honor of his name.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT night was a sleepless one for Morton, who heard the clock strike out each succeeding hour as he lay tossing in his bed in that curious state of vigilance in which the imagination, becoming morbidly excited, conjures up scenes and images which chase each other through the mind, thought replacing thought with marvellous rapidity.

One of the most remarkable phenomena of dreaming is the rapidity with which each train of thought flashes through the mind like an express-train through a way-station, only it may be followed by another which may or may not be on the same track. So that the mind in this state may be likened to some insignificant country village, which, though situated upon the main line of a great railroad, is too unimportant in itself for the trains to stop within its precincts and discharge their freights to supply its various wants, or to be stored up for its future consumption. But train after train, in rapid succession, whirls through it: one loaded with rich merchandise, another with passengers, while a third may contain nothing but gravel and sand for filling purposes.

The mental state in which Morton passed the night was this peculiar condition of dreamy semi-consciousness, in which his mind conjured up images and thoughts with a painful celerity, while every effort that he made at self-control or towards directing his ideas into new channels seemed vain and futile. For the mind, when the power of controlling it is for a moment loosened, is like a toy balloon which, deprived of its string, has been let loose in a room. It is confined within certain limits, but it cannot be guided by the will of its owner. It goes bouncing and bounding about wherever any chance puff of air may see fit to carry it, and rebounding from any obstacle opposed to its progress, it refuses to be brought to a standstill, preferring to sail off in some new direction. Nothing short of a collapse will make it quiet, but when the collapse comes it will be quiet enough, and often quiet beyond all hope of re-animation.

Henry Morton suffered acutely that night from thoughts and scenes of his own creation. First, he imagined that his wife hated him, that she preferred every living creature to himself. Every little kindness and simple act of civility which she had shown to others appeared before his mind with startling distinctness as a direct injury to himself. Then he would become despondent, thinking gloomily that no one could ever again be

to him what Ellen had become. Then he became hopeless, believing that she hated him, but that her aversion was unmerited; for he thought, in hastily reviewing his short married life, that he had done everything in his power to retain his young wife's affection. This mood, rapidly changing, would be succeeded by a feeling of hate, and for the time he hated his wife bitterly for all the pain she had so ruthlessly caused him. With hate for Ellen would come thirst for revenge, and he revolved in his mind scheme after scheme for making her endure the same sufferings she had imposed upon him.

Then the image of Theodore Myles would appear, and Morton would think of him with a fierce, jealous anger, accusing him of being the author of his unhappiness, and then he would think how he might take terrible vengeance for the wrong he had done.

At length, when the day began to dawn, and the gray morning light had cast its shadows about the room, Morton was still awake. But though sleep had not come to him throughout the night, he felt neither tired nor drowsy. On the contrary, he was unusually alert and energetic, and unable to remain in his bed longer, he dressed himself, and noiselessly went down stairs.

The parlor was cold and desolate as he entered it, and he could detect a slight odor of his last

night's cigar still pervading the dining-room: an unseen presence which reminded him of his burnt-out love. It was past seven o'clock, but none of the servants were astir, and he was in such an excited frame of mind that he could not compose himself to sit down to read. After wandering aimlessly about for a few moments, he decided not to wait for his solitary breakfast at home, but to go to one of the hotels, in hopes that the bustle and stir of a public place and the sound of many voices might distract his attention from thoughts of himself. So he put on his hat and coat mechanically, and turning up his collar to protect him from the raw cold of the morning air, he went out into the street.

But throughout the long day, distraction did not come to him for a moment. His mind constantly reverted to the scene he had witnessed in the little room at Mrs. Flyaway's. Ellen's face haunted him, and he could not work, until at length, fearing that he must be losing his reason, he decided to visit Lindsley, confide all his troubles in him, and seek his advice.

As Morton entered Lindsley's house, he heard his friend's voice in colloquy with a woman, and an irascible one at that. She was holding forth in shrill, high-pitched tones, and was evidently concluding her harangue, as he overheard her say, with the greatest volubility:—

"Well, Doctor Lindsley, I never would have believed as that mutton could 'a' gone against anybody's stomick, much less yours. Tough, did you say? Well, it's tougher where there's none, I opine, and I only hope as you'll never come to *that*, though I has my fears, after seein' such extravagant ways. Why, land sakes! you can't expect good, wholesome, full-growed mutton to melt in your mouth like them Frenchified vittles I 'spose you've been raised on."

The above interesting conversation was interrupted at this point, by the entrance of Morton, who saw the skirts of the enraged housekeeper vanishing, with an aggressive rustle, from one door as he entered by the other.

Lindsley, laughing, rose to welcome his friend, but as Morton advanced toward the window the strong light fell full upon his face, and Lindsley was struck with a change in it which he could not understand. For Morton looked older and paler, and his face seemed to have lost much of its refinement; the lips seemed more prominent, and the mouth set and stern, and over his whole countenance there was an expression of despondence that Lindsley had never before observed.

He immediately divined that something was troubling his friend, and set himself to work to dispel his melancholy, assuming that it must be caused by some trifling business difficulty which would speedily pass away.

"Well, old fellow," said he, "how goes it? You look as if you had lost your last friend."

"I am blue," replied Morton; "and I have come to see you to get cheered up a bit."

"Good," said Lindsley. "I have had a hard day, too, and am glad of company, though you don't seem in exactly what one might call an hilarious frame of mind."

Morton threw himself upon the sofa, and began to look contemplatively at the fire, wondering to himself how he could suggest the subject upon which he meditated asking advice. A wife's conduct is a delicate theme of conversation, even if one's confidant is one's best friend, and Morton evidently found it so, and hesitated about beginning upon it.

"Medicine is a beastly profession in some ways," said Lindsley, breaking the ice. "Everybody knows how it bores one to sit beside any of the older ladies, and to have her go into a lengthened explanation of the state of her health; to hear how her nervous system is completely unstrung; how she fears that she is breaking up, describing to you in hideous detail the doctor's latest opinion in regard to the condition of her stomach, liver, or others of the viscera, not usually mentioned in polite society. But no one pities the poor doctor who has this sort of thing dinned into his ears without mercy, not only by his

patients but also by his friends. Why, Morton ! ever since I intimated my intention to become a doctor, I don't believe I have talked uninterruptedly for half an hour with any one who hasn't at least once suggested the subject of his or her health."

"It must be tiresome," replied Morton ; "and I am sorry to say that I came to talk about something very similar."

"Why, aren't you well ?" asked Lindsley, solicitously, and, getting up, he crossed the room and sat down on the edge of the sofa where Morton was lying.

"Yes," said Morton : "I am well enough, but I am not quite so cheerful as I might be, and I came to you for advice. There is no one else in the world that I can turn to, so you must let me presume upon our friendship."

Lindsley sorrowfully noticed the omission of Ellen's name, and putting his hand on his friend's shoulder, he said, gently : —

"You know that I would do anything in the world for you, Morton. What's the trouble, old fellow ? I have noticed that you were becoming melancholy lately."

"Well," said Morton, coming at last to the point, "the truth is, that Ellen and I are not getting along quite so smoothly as we ought, and I want your advice. I am afraid of myself."

"How do you mean?" asked his friend. "Are you afraid that you are not going to work in the right way to make a wife happy?"

"No," said Morton, "not that; but Ellen likes society, whereas I hate it; and we are beginning to quarrel about it and the attention she receives."

"You wouldn't like to go to parties and have nobody speak to her would you?" asked Lindsley, laughingly.

"Yes, I would," said Morton, eagerly. "Seeing her with other men makes me nearly crazy sometimes. It isn't the attention though that I object to, so much as the kind of attention." And then Morton went on to tell his friend what had happened the night before, describing the scene he had witnessed, and repeating Judge Porpus's remarks.

"I don't see anything out of the way in that," said Lindsley, when his friend had finished speaking. "Judge Porpus doesn't know anything about society, or he wouldn't have said what he did. I shouldn't attach the slightest importance to the whole affair."

"But I can't help it," said Morton. "This isn't the first dispute we have had. I have got excited like this every time we have been out lately. The evenings are so long that I get all tired out. I can't talk to any one else, because I

am thinking about Ellen all the time. It merely jars against me to see her talking and dancing with another man in the beginning of the evening, but it makes me nearly beside myself towards the end. Then when we get home, I reproach her, she gets angry, and we end up with a quarrel, and I lie awake most of the night brooding over some little look or action of hers. All this has been steadily growing worse, until lately I have been imagining frightful things while I am awake, and dreaming them when I sleep. Last night it was worse than ever before; I dreamed that I took Myles by the hair, and bending his head back as far as I could, I cut his throat from ear to ear. Then clutching him still by the hair, I kept opening and shutting the wound, saying, 'That's the way I like to see you smile.' Every time I shut my eyes I see him, and I am afraid that I shall kill him in some burst of ungovernable rage if this goes on. Now, what would you advise me to do?"

"Don't you believe you exaggerate the feeling by allowing your mind to dwell on it?" asked Lindsley, seriously alarmed by the mental condition of his friend.

"Yes," replied Morton, "but I can't help it. At first I could concentrate my mind on other things, but now I can't. If I try to read, the page gets red, and the letters run sidewise across, until I can't form the words. The more I try, the

more nervous I become. I taste blood, smell blood, see blood, and the only thing that reassures me is to see Ellen. So far, this has always recalled me to myself, but if I see many scenes like that of last night, I don't know what I may do. You may think this is exaggeration, but it isn't. I know I never believed that Indians and barbarians, when excited, saw blood, and I laughed when I read in the *Mysteries of Paris* how the Slasher *saw red*. But I don't laugh now; I am afraid. I haven't the same power over myself that I used to have."

"Have you ever told Ellen about this?" asked Lindsley.

"No," said Morton. "It would frighten her."

"I would n't say anything about it," said Lindsley. "The trouble is that you are all used up. You work too hard over your law cases, you don't get sleep enough, and then you worry about Ellen. Law work all day, and domestic worry all the rest of the time, together with the loss of sleep, is enough to make any one sick. It is an axiom in medicine that when a man can't sleep, he needs rest. Now, what you ought to do is to take Ellen and go off together for a little vacation."

"That's a pleasant prescription," replied Morton, "but it's more easily given than taken. I can't get away until a decision is reached in our insurance case."

"Or, to put it more plainly," said Lindsley, "you are willing to sacrifice your health, and both Ellen's happiness and your own, simply to secure a little more reputation. Did it ever occur to you what would become of Ellen, if by any chance you should happen to murder Miles?"

"Yes," replied Morton; "I believe that the thought of the suffering I should bring upon her is the only thing that has kept me out of it."

"Well," said Lindsley, "just think seriously of that, and you will decide to go away, if only for a week."

"Perhaps Ellen won't be willing to go," suggested Morton.

"Then go without her," replied his friend. "If she can't go with you, I will."

"All right," said Morton. "I'll see if I can manage it. Can't you give me some medicine to make me sleep?"

"Certainly I can," said Lindsley. "When do you expect the Ellertons?"

"Some time next week," was the reply.

"It's a curious time for an invalid to come home. The next three months are usually considered the worst in our climate for people with lung trouble."

"Yes, I know it; but Mr. Ellerton has not improved as much as we hoped, and they are going to try Florida."

"Mrs. Ellerton will help to arrange all your difficulties when she is here to advise her daughter."

"Yes," replied Morton. "I long to have her back again. Now, to revert to the subject once more, don't you think that Ellen ought to give up Myles?"

"Yes, she certainly ought to, and I am sure she will, if you only ask her without getting angry about it. She only cares for him because he is useful. A woman must have some pet monkey to lead about by a string. If she doesn't like to stop at once, and fears it may make a talk, just be reasonable about it, and let me talk with her for you. You don't know whether any of your family have had this same failing, do you?" asked Lindsley, who had been waiting for a suitable context to ask this question, only to bring it out abruptly.

"No," replied Morton, "I don't. But I asked Mr. Hamilton, particularly, if there was any insanity in our family, and he said there was not. You don't think there is anything the matter with me, do you?"

"No," replied Lindsley, reassuringly. "I think you are a little stiff in your ideas, but that is natural enough, I suppose, when a man's in love."

"All right," said Morton. "I am much obliged, old fellow. I feel fifty per cent. better already."

I'll go home and talk with Ellen, and try to arrange matters. Perhaps we can go on to New York to meet Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton, and stay there a few days."

While Morton was speaking, he had risen from the sofa and begun to make preparations to go. He looked a different man from the one who had entered the office a few minutes before, and he took leave of Lindsley with an animation which argued the dawn of new hopes.

After his friend had gone, Lindsley drew a chair near the fire, and sinking upon its cushions, began to review the afternoon's confidence. Morton's revelations had impressed him more seriously than he had allowed his friend to believe. He feared that feelings as strong as Morton was beginning to manifest were of more consequence than he himself had at first realized. He knew, too, that Ellen was frivolous, and he feared that she was fickle, and he made up his mind that it was his duty, as the friend of both, to advise her of this dangerous and growing element in Morton's character.

Thus both Judge Porpus and Lindsley, within the same twenty-four hours, determined to warn the girl of the danger she was courting—good intentions, which were destined to pave a different place than Morton's pathway.

Dear reader, did it ever occur to you that one's

faith in another, which has been marred by a suppressed doubt or weakened by a made-up quarrel, is very like a punctured foot-ball which boys have repaired with a patch of court-plaster? A little too much pressure upon the weakened place, and the necessity will occur for new repair; but, repaired too often, even patching it up ceases to be possible in time. Alas, how many of us have had our faith patched up in the same way that boys repair their foot-balls!

CHAPTER XIV.

No sooner had Ellen's head touched the pillow, than she was fast asleep, for she was very tired, having danced almost incessantly throughout the long evening. The little difficulty with Morton had made her angry for the moment, but it was soon forgotten, until, when the morning found her rested and restored, she remembered that all was not as it should be between them. She saw by the clock on her mantel that it was considerably earlier than she was accustomed to rise, but instead of again composing herself to sleep, she decided to make an effort to breakfast with her husband, and to adjust their quarrel before he should leave the house.

With this intention she dressed herself as expeditiously as possible, and having made one or two extra attempts at beautifying herself, she went to Morton's room and peered in, hoping to find that she had anticipated him.

But Morton was not there, and with a little sigh of disappointment she tripped down the stairs, but only to perceive that his hat and coat were not in their accustomed place in the hall. She concluded that he must have gone to his

office, and regretted that Morton should have left the house without their quarrel being made up, for in her hazy recollection, the dispute seemed but slightly more serious than many which preceded it.

She sat down to her solitary breakfast and toyed with her spoon, regretting that Morton should make himself unhappy; and she found herself longing for a return of the old days when she had been a gracious recipient and Morton an eager and devoted lover, and she would willingly have sacrificed everything for a return of their former happiness.

When she had finished her breakfast, she turned to the servant, who was still standing in the room, and asked: —

“When did Mr. Morton leave the house?”

“I don’t know, ma’am,” he replied. “His coat and hat were gone when I came down stairs.”

“What!” asked Ellen, in amazement, “did not Mr. Morton breakfast at home?”

“No, ma’am.”

Ellen was now thoroughly surprised. But disguising her astonishment as best she could, she continued: —

“He must have gone to the club for breakfast. I shall lunch at home to-day, James.”

Ellen went up stairs to her morning-room, — a cheerful apartment, with a flood of sunshine pour-

ing through its windows, and sitting down, began to think seriously over their quarrel and Morton's unusual action. She saw that he must have been deeply roused to have acted as he had; but the more she thought the less she could find in her own behavior to reproach herself with. On the contrary, she thought Morton irritable, exacting, and jealous, and she loved him none the better for what seemed to her his unreasonable demands. Nevertheless, she was heartily tired of their continual disagreements, and rather than suffer a continuance of them, she was willing to renounce everything that was pleasant to her. Longing for tranquillity and ready to purchase it at any price, she finally determined that the affair with Myles, however harmless and diverting it might be, must be the first sacrifice demanded by domestic calm. Having arrived at this sensible conclusion, she made her toilet very carefully, and went out on a shopping excursion, which was followed by a short drive. After lunch she settled herself down to read a novel, with the virtuous resolve that she would discourage Mr. Myles's attentions on the very first occasion which should present itself. The more she thought of the matter, the less effort this seemed to require of her, for she was already beginning to tire of Myles, and lately she had been dividing her smiles between him and another of her numerous admirers.

Thus far, very little has been said of Mr. Theodore Myles, the third actor in the scene at Mrs. Flyaway's,—an omission upon the part of the chronicler which Mr. Myles himself would have been slow to pardon, for he considered himself far too important a personage to be ignored. He would have preferred the most unqualified disapproval to total neglect. Mr. Myles was a representative of a class which unfortunately seems to be a growing one in our larger American cities. He had no occupation except in ministering to his own pleasure, and possibly in detracting from the pleasure of others who did not happen to be in his own particular set, provided, however, that he could do this without causing himself any unnecessary inconvenience. His face was contorted into an habitual sneer, so that the lower part reminded one of a game of tag, in which the upper lip was striving to catch the nose, which, in its efforts at escape, seemed in danger of interfering with the vision of the congested eyes above. In dress and manners he resembled an English groom, and his tastes and habits would not have been inconsistent with Milton's Belial. He hated Morton, as we have already said, and on account of this very enmity he had made greater efforts to please Ellen, since he readily saw that his devotion was not agreeable to her husband. Then, too, he believed that he really loved her for her own

charms. To be sure, he had experienced the same sensation that he now felt for her many times before, with as many different women; but nevertheless he fancied himself desperately in love, and Ellen's apparent indifference to him, and light acceptance of his devotion, had made him still more deeply in earnest.

The morning after Mrs. Flyaway's ball, Myles lunched with one of his especial friends at the club which they both frequented. In the course of their conversation over the relative merits of horses, prize-fighters, and other members of the brute creation still less praiseworthy, Myles's companion took occasion to chaff his friend about Mrs. Morton, adopting a tone of condolence while pretending to sympathize with him for being "cut out," as he delicately expressed it.

All this Myles took in good part and quietly laughed off, but it nevertheless provoked him, because he considered himself irresistible to women, and was particularly sensitive to ridicule on this point, a foible of which his friend was thoroughly cognizant. Then, too, he had observed several indications of late which led him to suspect that he was losing his influence over Ellen, a fear which his friend's banter went far towards confirming. It had been Myles's custom to call on her one afternoon of every week, and his companion's remarks had decided him to make his

weekly visit that very afternoon, in order that he might come to an understanding with her, or beat a retreat and seek some more accessible fortress which might be carried by assault. A long siege was irksome to Myles, since it required too much thought, and a too careful observance of the ordinary forms of politeness. So, after lunch, Myles sauntered slowly down the street, meditating upon exactly what plan he should pursue, and directed his steps towards the Ellertons' house, without that air of stolid indifference which usually characterized him. For Myles and his particular set considered the *sine qua non* of good form to be as complete an air of stolid indifference as each was capable of assuming.

When her visitor was announced, Ellen was sitting upon a blue velvet sofa, which was drawn up before an open wood fire. She rose languidly as Myles entered the room, and held out her hand to him, with an air of supreme indifference, saying:

"How do you do, Mr. Myles?"

Myles took the extended hand and held it in his own, gently pressing it, and looked at the girl with such marked admiration in his eyes that the color mounted to her face. Angry at the unwarranted familiarity, she disengaged her hand abruptly, and drawing back haughtily, she seated herself again on the sofa, and took up her book. Her manner was intensely dignified, and Myles began

to think that perhaps he had been a little precipitate in making his first advance, so he hastened to say : —

“You were so exquisitely beautiful last night, Mrs. Morton, that I came to-day in hopes that I might be disenchanted.”

“A gallant wish, and easily satisfied, no doubt. Good-bye.”

“You are cruel, as well as beautiful,” said Myles, easily, and taking the vacant place beside her, he bent forward toward Ellen until his face came close to hers.

“You are cruel, as well as beautiful,” repeated he. “How can you treat your devoted admirer so harshly?”

“I don’t treat him. He treats himself. That’s your own odious expression, is it not?”

“Yes,” replied Myles; “but instead of treating myself to a sight of your loveliness, I shall soon be driven to a laudanum cocktail.”

“When you are sufficiently disenchanted, please let me know,” said Ellen, taking up her book, and casting down her eyes coquettishly, so that their long lashes were thrown into relief. “I am curious to observe the effect.”

“Instead of being disenchanted, I am still more hopelessly involved,” returned Myles. “I find you more bewitching than ever.”

“Now, Mr. Myles,” said Ellen, changing her

bantering tone for a more serious one, and laying aside the book, "suppose you try to be sensible for a moment. Did it never occur to you that so many compliments might become tiresome after a time."

"No one can look at you and not show his admiration, at least involuntarily. You should sympathize with the feelings you arouse, Mrs. Morton, not condemn them."

Ellen began to realize that the path she had mapped out for herself was beset with many difficulties. Myles sat beside her on the sofa, so self-assured and confident, that she could not endure the idea of saying what she knew must hurt his feelings. Alas! How much wrongdoing is due to this fear of hurting the feelings of others! The more Ellen considered the subject of discouraging Myles, the more distasteful the idea became, and there was a long pause in the conversation — a pause which Myles employed by gazing at his companion, unrebuked.

She looked exquisitely beautiful with her head resting on the blue velvet of the sofa, a poem in blue and gold, which might have tempted a saint into forgetfulness, could he have looked upon her as she sat there gazing into the fire. The exquisite proportions of her full and perfectly moulded figure were more than suggested by her negligent attitude, which, together with her

languid eyes and slightly parted, rich, full lips formed a picture which tempted Myles almost beyond endurance.

At length, doubtful of his powers of resistance, Myles bent forward, until his face was near to the girl's, and said, tenderly:—

“Don't you agree with me?”

“I beg your pardon,” said Ellen, starting from her reverie. “I did not hear. What did you say?”

“I did not *say* anything,” replied Myles, significantly, “but I looked volumes.”

“I wish I had seen you. I can't imagine your looking so serious as that expression implies.”

“Mrs. Morton,” said Myles, still leaning forward, and looking deep into her eyes, “would you do me the justice to believe that the only reason I am not more serious with you is because I fear I may be betrayed into saying something that might be too serious?”

Ellen looked up laughingly, prepared to answer in the strain of their former conversation, when she saw an expression in Myles's face that convinced her that he could be serious, and very serious, too. His face was pale with contending emotions, and as she met his eyes, for a moment she fancied they burned their way through her own, until penetrating through the windows, they sank deep into the soul beneath, making her heart

contract, like flesh under the application of the red-hot iron. Her whole being shrank from the feelings that this glance had revealed; and she rose from the sofa haughtily, an offended woman offended at her weakest point, — her self-love.

Myles looked at her deprecatingly for a moment, and then apparently losing all command over himself in the fierceness of his passion, he said, with a wild burst: —

“Mrs. Morton, hear my excuse! I love you, and I have always loved you. I have tried to conceal it, but I can do so no longer. I love you desperately.”

“You might at least have spared me this humiliation,” said Ellen, bursting into tears. “I never could have believed that you could have been so ungenerous.”

“That is the way with all women,” said Myles, bitterly, but with appalling truth: “They tempt a man, bewitch him, and encourage him. Then when the feelings they have aroused become too strong for the poor devil to conceal, they spurn him like a worthless thing, and trample under foot one whose whole fault is that he loves them.” Myles paused, and looked moodily at the fire; then resuming the conversation, he said, slowly, in an altered tone, and with great apparent effort: —

“Pray forgive me, Mrs. Morton. I was beside

myself, I think. I promise you, this shall not occur again."

"I will try to forget that you have insulted me," said Ellen, slowly; "but our friendship, of course, must cease after to-day. We can still meet each other in society, and outwardly we can be friendly, beyond that our acquaintance need not go."

"Mrs. Morton, do you realize to what you are condemning me?" asked Miles, excitedly, determined not to give up the battle without one final effort. He saw that he was mistaken in his estimate of Ellen's character, but her rejection of his suit offered him a still greater inducement for persisting, so he continued, eagerly:—

"Do you realize that, in condemning me to see you, to meet you, and to hear your voice, without the hope of being with you, you consign me to a living death? Such a relationship would be impossible!"

"No, Mr. Myles, it is the only thing left open to us. Hereafter we can be nothing more than acquaintances. If it were not for what people might say, I should say that even that was too much."

Ellen's manner was so haughty, and her words were spoken so deliberately, and with such an evident feeling of relief, that Myles saw that further pursuit was hopeless, at least for the present.

With a look of despondency, he said, in pleading tones:—

“Say, at least, that you will try to forgive me, Mrs. Morton.”

“Yes,” said the girl, dreamily; “I will try.”

Myles looked at her a moment, as if taking a last long look at all that was dear to him, and then, holding out his hand, he said, in a low voice:—

“Good-bye. You will give me your hand, will you not, Mrs. Morton?”

Ellen held out her hand, and said, in the same unrelenting voice that she had adopted during the latter part of their interview:—

“Good-bye.”

Myles was very near the girl as he took her hand. Whether it was the contact of her warm hand, or the fragrance of her breath on his face that tempted him, he never knew; but giving way to an irresistible impulse he caught her in his arms, and kissed her repeatedly on the lips.

Ellen passionately recoiled, and tore herself violently from his arms. Her action was so sudden and so convulsive, that Myles himself was startled, and a feeling of dread took possession of him, of what, he could not tell. He hastily looked up into the girl's face, and there read a look of horror, that never could be effaced from his memory.

For Ellen stood with parted lips, as motionless and colorless as a marble statue, except for her heaving bosom; her eyes were riveted on the door, and as Miles mechanically followed the direction of her gaze, he experienced a thrill of horror when his glance encountered that of Morton, who was standing in the doorway.

CHAPTER XV.

MORTON stood there on the threshold, glaring from one to the other, looking more like a tiger than a man. The contraction of the muscles of the mouth, at all times peculiar to him, but now intensely exaggerated, the swollen and contorted veins of his forehead, and the dilated nostrils, gave to his face an indescribable expression of ferocity; his countenance was ghastly pale, and his lips were flecked with blood, where he had bitten them in his efforts at silence and self-control, and his whole appearance was one of maniacal rage, before which the strongest nature would falter. Theodore Myles, although he was a reckless and fearless man, started back and trembled as he encountered that deadly gaze, like one who is suddenly confronted by immediate death in some ghastly form.

Morton glared from one to the other with blazing eyes, before which the figures in front of him seemed to contract, as if before some fiery blast, and for one brief, terrible moment he stood motionless, a long procession of murders passing through his mind; then concentrating his flaming and bloodshot eyes on Myles, he ad-

vanced slowly towards him, with such an expression in his face, that Ellen, with a cry of terror, fell fainting upon the floor.

That cry was Morton's salvation; for one brief moment it diverted his mind from his victim, and saved him from murder. The fainting figure of his wife recalled him to himself, and the prostrate form frightened him: remorse for a moment replaced revenge. He turned fiercely upon Myles, regarding him for an instant with an expression of pitiless contempt. Then slowly raising his arm, he pointed to the door, and said, in tones which brooked no delay:—

“Go!”

Myles was no coward, but the tone of Morton's voice, and the suppressed passion of his gesture, would have intimidated even a braver man than he. For a moment he stood irresolute, glancing at the unconscious girl; but at the sight of Morton still pointing at the door, discretion prevailed, and he hastened from the room in silence.

After a few fluttering attempts, Ellen had ceased to breathe, and Morton tenderly bent over her, suddenly struck with fear at what he had done. He lifted her up and gently laid her on the sofa. There was still no sign of animation. Having now become thoroughly alarmed at the result of his ungovernable passion, remorse and sorrow replaced every other feeling. He rushed

to the bell and rang it furiously. To the servant who hastened into the room, in answer to his summons, he said, breathlessly:—

“Mrs. Morton has fainted. Send Julie here, and run for the nearest doctor.”

Then returning to the sofa, he sank down on his knees beside it, in masculine helplessness. Completely unmanned by the conflict of emotions, he began to weep, holding both of Ellen’s hands passionately in his own. The scene was disturbed by the entrance of the maid, who divined the matter at a glance, and began to bustle about with the importance of a Frenchwoman, who sniffs the atmosphere of an affair of the heart. She was delighted at the opportunity of showing her own importance and of ordering her master about. She quickly dispatched Morton for iced water and brandy, while she applied a bottle of smelling-salts, which she always carried about her, to her mistress’ nostrils, and began chafing her hands and unloosening her dress. When Morton returned with the brandy and iced water, they administered these domestic remedies, at first carefully; but then finding that they did not produce the slightest effect, freely, and at length, hopelessly. But Ellen still remained unconscious, and as the maid saw the remedies, upon which she had learned to place reliance, so signally fail, she in turn became alarmed and

despondent, and giving up all attempts at resuscitation, she sat down helplessly by her side, and declaring that her dear mistress was dead, she began to sob and moan, and bewail the loss of so good a lady, at the same time praising and enumerating her many good qualities.

“*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*” How unfortunate it is that we should withhold our praise from the living, who would prize it, only at length to accord it when death has made it valueless!

As the maid's hopes declined, Morton's presence of mind began to return. Feeling that inactivity was unbearable, and that he must do something, he took Ellen tenderly in his arms, and carried her up stairs, to her own room, where he laid her gently on the sofa, opening a window, so that the cold air might blow upon her. This measure was scarcely accomplished when the doctor arrived, who came into the room with that air of coolness, decision, and consciousness of knowing-exactly-what-to-do-in-emergency, which is so immeasurably dear to us when danger is at hand. An air suggesting that though he does not ignore the seriousness of the case, he still has seen the struggle between death and life so much nearer, and in such vastly more painful form, that we shift the responsibility to his shoulders with confidence and a positive feeling of relief.

Doctor Washburn, who was the Ellertons' family physician, nodded familiarly to Morton, and immediately began to busy himself in making his preliminary examination of the case, while Morton hastily explained to him that Ellen had fainted from a sudden fright, and detailed at length the measures they had already adopted. During Morton's narration, the doctor was examining his patient. At length he seemed satisfied, and taking the stethoscope from his ears, with which he been listening to his patient's heart, he turned to Morton, and said, with great decision: —

"It is a case of complete syncope. The pulsations of the heart are no longer audible, and the respirations have entirely ceased. So much time has elapsed that we must resort to stronger measures at once. I propose to apply hot water over the region of the heart, and to administer brandy subcutaneously, with mustard as an external application. If you will get the mustard, and order some sheets to be put in the oven, the maid and I can attend to everything else. If these measures don't succeed, we must try artificial respiration and more heroic means."

Morton hurried off in quest of what the doctor had ordered; and when he returned he was relieved by seeing that Ellen was breathing heavily, and by the cheering words of Doctor Washburn, who greeted him as he came anxiously into the chamber by saying, —

"The heat excited the action of the heart at once. It is a most admirable cardiac stimulant! She is all right now. Absolute quiet is all that is required to establish a perfect recovery."

"Thank God!" said Morton, fervently, sinking into a chair and heaving a deep sigh of relief. "I feared the worst as I came up stairs."

"Now," said the doctor, as Ellen was rapidly recovering consciousness, "you had best leave us, to get Mrs. Morton quietly to bed, for I am afraid that your presence may agitate her when she recognizes us."

Morton, availing himself of this permission, left the room, gladly seizing upon any pretext by which he could avoid a more minute explanation of the cause of Ellen's fright than he had at first given to Doctor Washburn. Moreover, he was anxious not to be betrayed into speaking with Ellen herself on this subject, until he should have had an opportunity of thinking collectedly over the events of the last twenty-four hours.

Now that Ellen's recovery was certain, and his fears for her bodily safety had subsided, his jealousy quickly regained its sway over him, and he was bitterly reviewing the day's new experiences, when he was interrupted by Doctor Washburn, who had left Ellen in charge of her maid.

The doctor was evidently in a hurry to visit some other patient, for he merely put his head

into the room where Morton was sitting, and having enjoined that Ellen should be shielded from the least excitement, he promised to look in again on his patient during the evening, and quickly leaving the house, drove rapidly down the street.

Morton watched at the window until the doctor's buggy had disappeared from sight. Then he returned to his chair and to his bitter meditations. He had left Lindsley's office after their conversation that afternoon in the happiest frame of mind that he had known for weeks; and he looked forward to a reconciliation with his wife, and to an adjustment of their little differences, as an easily accomplished result.

To be sure, the conversation with Lindsley had been merely a confidence on his part; but nevertheless, it had the effect of making him more cheerful and more sanguine: a result which was due more to the unburdening of an overloaded mind than to anything which his friend had said to reassure him; for, to persons of reticent habit, it is hard to overestimate the relief which may follow from the open discussion of a hitherto carefully guarded source of trouble.

Morton had run up the steps, without the slightest possible misgiving, and opening the door with his latch-key, he had paused in the hall while taking off his hat. Hearing no voices from the parlor, for the latter part of the conversation be-

tween Myles and his wife had been carried on in low tones, he naturally concluded that Ellen was alone, and with the hope of taking her by surprise, he had entered the parlor noiselessly, picturing to himself her look of astonishment and delight at his unexpected arrival, for it was still much earlier than his usual hour of return. He did surprise Ellen, but alas! he had given himself a still greater surprise; for there, in the arms of his former rival,—his greatest enemy,—he beheld his adored wife!

For a moment he was paralyzed, and he clutched at the door-sill for support. Then a terrible longing for revenge mastered him. Revenge on Myles for his seduction; revenge upon Ellen for her faithlessness. Then Ellen's cry, and the sight of her prostrate form, had banished every thought of the wrongs that he himself had sustained, and remorse for his contemplated crime, and grief for its disastrous result, reigned instead, and jealousy was forgotten, while the fear of Ellen's death monopolized his mind.

But now that Ellen's safety was assured, his thoughts reverted to his own injuries, and his accurate memory recalled to him with pitiless detail the scene of Ellen in the arms of Myles, while his vivid and now almost diseased imagination supplied the shadows to that gloomy picture. By unfortunate chance, he had entered the room

an incalculable instant after Myles had clasped Ellen in his arms. How long the embrace had lasted, or what had gone before, he had no means of judging; but he had seen Myles strain Ellen to his breast, kissing her repeatedly. We have spoken before of Morton's peculiar ideas relating to love, and the obligations of the marriage vow. His whole conception of domestic love was a singularly pure one, and in those guilty kisses he read the death blow to his love. He felt that his idol was shattered, and no desire came to him to gather up the scattered fragments, for, since Ellen had known the pollution of another's kisses, she could never again occupy the wife's place in his heart, which she had so lightly valued.

Those kisses were to him an end of love; for, according to his ideal, love for a wife was a complex feeling, necessarily accompanied by trust and respect. Trust and respect were feelings which he knew he could never experience again; and without them love to him was synonymous with lust. For as there is a spiritual as well as a physical body, so is there a spiritual as well as a physical love: a love of the senses, and a love of the mind; and Morton's ideal of conjugal love was a combination of the two. Hitherto his love for Ellen had been this golden mean. Henceforth, if they continued in

their former domestic relations, his love, he knew, must be simply a physical one, necessarily debasing to them both. Looking upon the matter in this light, there was only one course open to them,—a complete separation. It was a struggle, as it were, between the body and the soul, from which the soul came out victorious; and Morton at length decided that Ellen and he must part, at least until he could feel for her as he must feel for his wife; as he always had felt until that fatal day. As he gradually came to the decision that a separation from Ellen was his only course, he tried to persuade himself that his jealousy had played no part in bringing him to this conclusion,—a delusion he tried to foster. The scene of Ellen in Myles's arms was constantly before him, and his imagination tortured him by suggesting suspicions that this was not the first time the same scene had been enacted; for he remembered with pain that this was the first time but once, during the whole winter, when he had come home before their late dinner-hour, and on that single exception he had not found Ellen alone.

Morton was an extremely persistent and determined man. Once having decided upon any course, he was in the habit of pursuing it relentlessly, sparing neither himself nor others; and nothing short of absolute conviction could alter

his determination. So, having once come to a decision, his course of action was irretrievably settled, and it only remained for him to decide how their separation might be accomplished with the greatest kindness to Ellen, and the least possible publicity. The daily expected arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton afforded the most natural solution to this question.

Until the Ellertons' return, he decided to make no change in their outward relations, but to continue living nominally at home, adopting the ordinary terms of formal politeness towards his wife. This could be easily arranged, as the dinner-hour was the only time during the day when they were together, and the companionship of a third person would easily prevent a tête-à-tête.

After the Ellertons' return, he would explain the state of the case to them; tell them his own convictions, and be guided by their wishes, at least as far as the method of their separation was concerned. Meanwhile he decided to make his decision known to Ellen, as kindly as was possible, in case she should notice or allude to his altered demeanor.

CHAPTER XVI.

ELLEN'S recovery was much more protracted than Doctor Washburn had at first predicted, and Morton and she did not see each other alone during the few days that followed, as the maid was always present during his visits to the sick-room.

As Ellen was not well enough to come down stairs until the day before the Ellertons' expected arrival, no opportunity occurred for reference to the cause of her illness, until the evening preceding her parents' return. She, too, had been as anxious to escape a tête-à-tête as had Morton, and when two people wish to avoid each other, it is not strange that their mutual desire should be gratified. In this way, the scene in the parlor which Morton had witnessed, had until now escaped discussion; but as this was presumably the last opportunity for an explanation, Morton felt that he ought to make his determination known to Ellen, before the arrival of her parents.

The Ellertons had sailed for New York, and were to come directly to Boston, remaining only long enough to pay their daughter a flying visit. They were then to go to Florida for the winter, where they expected to remain until the heat

drove them northward, when they intended to travel slowly north, so as to arrive at Newport in June, where they proposed to pass the summer.

Morton had thought carefully over the matter of the estrangement between Ellen and himself during these last few days, and had decided that the best plan would be for Ellen to join her parents in their southern trip. By this means they could live apart without giving any just cause for the wagging of malicious tongues, and he hoped absence and her mother's influence would bring matters to a happy conclusion.

He had not come to this conviction without many doubts and regrets, for he still loved his wife devotedly, in spite of the blow his self-love had received, and notwithstanding the suspicions which his jealous nature continually suggested to him.

But, as Chatham says, "confidence is a plant of slow growth,"—a wise saying, that might well have been supplemented by adding that it is also a very tender plant, which wilts and withers when once shaken by the cold breath of suspicion. But although he yearned to forgive everything, to return to their old relationship, striving to make the best of Ellen's weaknesses and faults, and to learn to take the bitter with the sweet, and by not expecting much, to learn to escape continual disappointment, still his highest nature revolted

from the thought. Although he pined to hold her in his arms once more, to kiss her lips and to tell her that he loved her, he knew that this was a weakness, debasing his ideal love, and he bravely resisted the temptation. He believed that she had been unfaithful to him. He felt that he could not trust her, and feeling as he did, but one course seemed open to him, in spite of the pain that it must cause them both. That course was a complete separation, until the old feeling of trust and respect should return. A separation — temporary he hoped, permanent he feared. Then, too, he mistrusted himself, and dared not expose himself again to the temptation he had escaped when he saw Ellen in Myles's arms. For he knew that it was by the merest chance that he had been spared the commission of a deadly sin.

It was at dinner, on the evening preceding the Ellertons' return, that Morton and his wife were thrown together alone for the first time since the scene which caused their estrangement. The dinner was a quiet one, for Morton was preoccupied and abstracted, wondering how he could explain his feelings to Ellen in a way calculated to give her the least possible pain; but at length the formal meal was finished, and they had gone into the drawing-room, not as in former days, with Morton's arm lovingly about his wife's waist, but ceremoniously and decorously, Ellen preceding her husband, who

had opened the door for her, and had stood aside, with studied courtesy, for her to lead the way into the drawing-room.

Ellen took her accustomed seat upon the sofa before the fire, making room somewhat ostentatiously for her husband beside her, but Morton, not seeing her gesture, began to pace silently up and down the room, thinking how he could begin upon the disagreeable task before him.

"Do come and sit down," said Ellen, after Morton had made several tours of the room. "It makes me frightfully nervous to hear you walking up and down."

Morton stopped suddenly in his walk, and turning sharply about, he walked towards the fireplace, and threw himself into a chair drawn up opposite the sofa upon which his wife was sitting.

"What makes you so strange to-night?" asked Ellen, as he sat silently looking at the fire, which was burning briskly upon the bright andirons. Morton, whose thoughts were intent upon the scene he had witnessed at the last time they were together in this same room, answered, brusquely:—

"Theodore Myles."

Ellen had been expecting some allusion to this matter, and was glad Morton had suggested it, for she believed that a simple explanation on her part was all that was required to smooth matters

over, and make everything peaceful and comfortable again; so she replied, somewhat languidly:—

“Well, *don't* think about it any more. I had just told him that I did not want to see so much of him in the future, when he seized me in his arms and kissed me. Just at that minute you happened to come in. I couldn't help his kissing me. I am sure I hated it. So don't be angry about it, dear.”

“I am not angry about it now,” replied Morton, with a shade of suppressed contempt in his voice, surprised that what seemed to him so serious a matter, should appear of such trivial importance to her. “I am not in the least angry now,” continued he, “but I wanted to talk with you, and was thinking how I should begin. You expect your father and mother to-morrow, do you not?”

“Yes. The steamer got in to-day, and they ought to be here to-morrow.”

“Then,” said Morton, “we ought to talk over our affairs before their arrival, for of course we can not continue to live together after what has happened.”

“What do you mean?” asked Ellen, sitting up very straight, unable to believe what she had heard.

“I mean,” repeated Morton, “that of course it will be impossible for us to live together after what you have permitted.”

Ellen was for a moment completely bewildered at what Morton had said. Then seeing that he was serious, and beginning to remember the rigidity of his ideas, she burst into tears.

"But I told you that I could n't help it, if that odious Myles chose to do what he did," she sobbed, in broken sentences.

"That may be," replied Morton, "but the fact remains the same, that when I see another man act towards you as I saw Myles act, I can never feel for you as I have in the past, and from that moment you ceased to be my wife, except in name."

"How cruel it is of you to say such things, if you don't mean them," said Ellen, still weeping. "I ought not to be blamed if a great strong man seizes me in his arms, and kisses me by main force."

"Yes, you ought," said Morton. "You flirted with him, contrary to my wishes. He never would have done what he did, if you had not led him to believe he would not be repulsed."

"But I didn't flirt with him," replied Ellen. "I should think your absurd jealousy had done harm enough, without all this."

"It is utterly useless for us to discuss our feelings in this way," Morton coldly answered. "You have done what you knew was wrong, and you must accept the consequences. I have loved you,

and tried to do everything to make you happy, and I can find nothing to reproach myself with. In return, you have played cruelly with my most sacred and purest feelings, and you have goaded me almost to desperation, by constantly exciting my jealousy. I can't respect you, or trust you, and the only thing we can do is to separate, each going his own way. Perhaps in time, you will be willing to give up pleasures which came near making a criminal of your husband, and an unfaithful wife of you."

Ellen replied to this harangue of Morton's by an outburst of convulsive sobbing; then rising from the sofa, she crossed over to his chair, and placing her hand on his shoulder, she said, in a voice husky with sobs:—

"I know I have been wrong, but won't you forgive me, darling?" Then as Morton did not reply, she sank down upon her knees, in front of his chair, and burying her face in her hands she laid her head upon his knees, in an abandonment of passionate grief, and burst into a flood of tears.

Her attitude of self-abnegation, her evident love for him, and her confession of repentance, shook Morton's firmness. A passionate longing to lift up the lithe figure, kneeling at his feet, and comfort the sorrow, forgiving every wrong, made him waver in his resolution, and had almost

conquered him, when Ellen sobbed out, in broken sentences:—

“And what will everybody say, if you send me back to mamma?”

This injudicious sentence turned the scale against her. All Morton's softer feelings and hesitation vanished like lightning, and he made an effort as if to disengage himself from his wife.

“What will the world say!” he repeated, bitterly, “what will the world say! That is all you ever think of. You think of everybody in the world, except your husband. Perhaps if you thought a little less of other people, and a little more of him, you would have been a better wife. Now let us have no more acting. Go back to your sofa, and when you are prepared to listen to me, I will finish what I have to say.”

For one who, like Ellen, had been so accustomed to flattery as to believe that her lightest wish was law, this rejection of her proffered love was an unexpected occurrence. She was in the habit of commanding, and so accustomed to seeing her slightest concession gratefully received, that for a few moments, she could not realize that the advance she had made could be so totally rejected, and she remained passively kneeling, for a time irresolute. Then she rose from her knees, deeply wounded that she should

have so humbled herself, merely that the sacrifice of her pride should have been rejected as of no value.

She suppressed her sobs, and dried her eyes, with an assumption of dignity which seemed especially pathetic to her husband, who was observing her coldly, and resumed her seat on the sofa.

"Please finish what you have to say, as quickly as possible," she said.

"I have said before," said Morton, "that you could choose between other men and me. You have made your choice. The result is, that we can live together no longer. I propose that you should join your parents, and go south with them. You will be under their protection; and can ask your mother for advice, and make up your mind about the future. While you are with them, your dear, heartless world will not be likely to talk. When you have decided what to do, I will abide by your decision. But you must decide once for all, whether you prefer your husband's or other men's love, for you can't have both at the same time. It won't be a very happy time, for either of us, I fancy; but it is necessary that we should part, feeling as I do."

"You can speak for yourself," replied Ellen, coldly; "Florida is very gay at this season, and

I dare say I can manage to pass the time very pleasantly."

This little speech was made with the deliberate intention of wounding Morton; but seeing that it did not have the desired effect, she continued:—

"I have been to Florida before, and shall enjoy going there again, very much. There is a very pleasant society at Jacksonville, at this season. You can imagine me beguiling my temporary widowhood by riding, driving, and rowing, in the moonlight, with some distracting man, who may find me less objectionable than you seem to think me. Now, if you have nothing more to say, I will leave you."

"One thing more," said Morton: "will you explain matters to your parents, or shall I?"

"I shall, of course," replied Ellen, haughtily. "I should have supposed your natural delicacy would have answered that question."

"Very well," said Morton. "That is all I wanted to say. Now Ellen, dear, try to realize that I love you, and shall always love you; but that I can't live and be a good man, tortured as you have tortured me. Remember that our separation is caused, not by an impulse of mine, but by a wrong which you have done me. Our future happiness depends on you, and it is only to insure it, that I have decided as I have. You may continue to be frivolous and gay, you may

flirt and enjoy yourself, in the fashion you propose, but if you do, you will be guilty of a terrible wrong, and will surely be sorry for it. Don't depend so much on your beauty, dear. Beauty is not lasting, and think what an old age is before you, if you have left only that skeleton of a mind which is the sole attribute of a fashionable woman, when she has lost her personal charms."

"Don't preach any more," said Ellen, angrily interrupting him. "It makes me hate you. If you did everything in your power to make me wicked, you couldn't do more than you have done. Now, good-night."

"Oh! Ellen, don't go like that! This may be the last time we shall ever see each other alone. At least tell me, before you go, that you understand what I have said."

"I understand you as well as any one can understand the ravings of a maniac. As for giving up the only thing I care for in the world for your sake, I shall do nothing of the kind, and I sincerely hope that we sha'n't meet each other alone again, if you can't make yourself more agreeable than you have done this evening."

"Good-night," said Morton, holding out his hand. "Don't let us say anything more, for we shall certainly regret it. You don't understand me. I shall have to explain to Mrs. Ellerton."

"If you dare to talk with mamma, I shall never speak to you again," rejoined Ellen, angrily. "I never heard such a coarse idea! It's what one might have expected from a coachman's son."

Morton did not trust himself to reply to this stab; but it wounded him in the tenderest point of his defensive armor. He turned his back upon his wife, who had swept past him and was now standing by the door, and went quickly into the dining-room, leaving Ellen alone in the parlor. The remaining link in the chain which bound these two people together appeared to be broken at last by this blow which Ellen had dealt her husband. I say appeared, for there was still another safeguard, which was entirely unsuspected by Morton. For a little guardian angel, hovering over these two young people, was on its way to rivet together these loosening links, and to strengthen the chain which bound its father to its mother. A little child, whose tiny hands might yet be potent enough to sweep away the obstacles which stood between Ellen and her husband.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAN is a combination. Like a rope he is composed of divers strands, each of which is made up of many fibres, and even the fibres are susceptible of an almost infinite subdivision. In outward appearance, all ropes are similar. To be sure, some are long, and some are short; some are thick, and others thin; some knotted and snarled up, while others are smooth and without twists. You may have them sticky or slippery, reliable or strained, or perhaps even rotten to the very centre, but nevertheless they are all ropes, and nothing but ropes, and they only differ from each other according to the quantity and quality of their strands. Perhaps if we remembered that man is but a man, after all, and made due allowance for the varying proportion of the strands which compose his character, we should judge more leniently of those peculiarities which, being rudimentary in ourselves, may be so exaggerated in another as to constitute his individuality.

But however mistaken Morton may have been, and however greatly he may have erred in his judgment, according to our manner of thinking, it was, nevertheless, with a strengthened conviction

that separation was inevitable, that he returned from his office the following day.

The Ellertons had already arrived, and Morton found the hall in a state of bustle and confusion, crowded with trunks, bundles of rugs, and that innumerable number of packages which protective laws and friends seem to impose upon travelers returning from foreign lands.

In the midst of this chaos stood Mr. Ellerton, surrounded by several servants. He was directing the disposal of these various articles, with that nice attention to detail which characterized him. He came forward to greet his son-in-law, as Morton entered the house, with a manner so cordial that Morton feared lest Ellen had not informed her parents of the disagreement between them. But in this he was mistaken, for Ellen, angry at her rejected concessions, and worried by the idea of the impending separation, had chosen the earliest opportunity to pour forth to her mother the story of her fancied wrongs. Mrs. Ellerton had been both shocked and grieved at her daughter's recital, but she wisely refrained from making any comments on her conduct, seeing that criticism would be of no avail to one in Ellen's excited state. She had, therefore, simply contented herself with explaining the matter to her husband. Mr. Ellerton, at first, had been inclined to regard the matter as a joke.—“It

should be laughed off," he had said; and his wife, fearing the effect of a cannonade of his heavy raillery, and dreading lest any interference on his part should increase the rupture between the young people, had with much difficulty succeeded in exacting from him a promise that he would leave the adjustment of the affair to her.

Mrs. Ellerton received Morton as kindly as Mr. Ellerton had done, and no allusion was made to the cause of the disagreement until after dinner, when she joined her son-in-law in the dining-room, where he was smoking his cigar in solitude.

As Mrs. Ellerton entered the room, Morton was struck with the air of motherliness and sweetness which seemed to pervade her every motion. Mrs. Ellerton was not only a lady, in every sense of this elastic word, but she was also a kind one: one of those women, whose mission in life seems to be that they shall assist their struggling brothers and sisters over the paths and up the ascents which we all find so stony, and so hard to climb. Another's burden she regarded as her own especial property, and her experience and knowledge of the world made her advice of unusual value, combined, as it was, with a rare tact. Morton knew her well, and had learned to admire and respect her, long before his marriage with her daughter, and he knew that he had a champion in his wife's mother the moment she entered the room.

As Mrs. Ellerton came forward, Morton rose from his chair, and was about to lay aside his cigar, when she anticipated his intention, by saying, —

“Now don’t stop smoking on my account. I came to talk with you, not to disturb you. Besides I really like the perfume of a good cigar, in its suitable place.” So saying, she seated herself at the table near Morton, and continued: —

“I wanted to talk with you alone, because Ellen tells me that you two are not so happy together as you ought to be, and I hope that I may be able to help you smooth out your difficulties.”

“Dear Mrs. Ellerton,” said Morton, sadly, “Ellen and I are as far apart now, as it possible for a husband and wife to be. I know that I have been much to blame, but still it’s not entirely my fault. Has Ellen told you everything?”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Ellerton. “I have heard the whole story from Ellen, and I have no doubt that she has acted very thoughtlessly. I sympathize with you, dear Henry, and do not wonder that you have felt injured, and have been angry and severe. But we must remember that Ellen is still very young and attractive, and that her temptations have been great.”

“I am glad she has made you her confidant,” said Morton, in a tone of great relief. “Other-

wise, I could not have spoken frankly, even to you."

"Yes," continued Mrs. Ellerton, "Ellen has told me everything, I believe. Among other things, she says you think it best that she should join us in our Southern trip. Now Henry, my dear, I doubt very much whether this is a wise decision on your part. Where there is any disagreement between a husband and wife, I believe it is always best for them to fight it out at once. This idea of separating seems to me a cowardly way of shunning what is unpleasant."

"We have tried the fighting plan very faithfully," said Morton, smiling sadly, "but it has signally failed, and matters have now come to an open breach between us."

"Then, in that case," said Mrs. Ellerton, "you have merely to insist that Ellen should heed your request, and remember that she is no longer a *débutante*. She, of course, must comply with your wishes."

"Mrs. Ellerton, you don't understand me," replied Morton. "If Ellen would do what you say, all would be plain sailing. I should then require that she should give up going into society, as long as she retains her present notions of propriety, and I believe that I should do what is right. But this is not the reason why I want Ellen to go away. I tried to explain my motives

to her, but I fear that she did not comprehend my meaning. Lately, my feelings for Ellen have undergone a change; of course I love her better than any one else in the world, but still it is not the love a man should feel for his wife — the love I have hitherto felt for Ellen. It is a love without trust, confidence, and respect. Of course we can go on living together, and we should probably be happy, but such a life would be an existence which would kill every germ of manliness and self-respect in me. It would lower Ellen in my estimation, and be degrading to us both. Until my feeling for Ellen can be what it ought to be, we must live apart; and, Mrs. Ellerton, I ought not to disguise from you my fears that my love for Ellen will never be what it was, until she proves that trust and respect are merited, and is willing to make some sacrifices to convince me that she really regrets all the pain she has inflicted on me in these last few months."

"I respect your feelings," said Mrs. Ellerton, who was beginning to find the task of peace-maker a difficult one, in the present instance; "but still it seems to me that they are rather unpractical."

"That may be," said Morton; "but nevertheless they are very firmly rooted in my mind. You certainly would not urge me to do what I know

is wrong. Much of our so-called love is purely a physical feeling nowadays, and I am certain that my love for Ellen would degenerate into that, unless we lived apart for a time."

"I understand what you mean, perfectly," said Mrs. Ellerton; "but in a choice of two evils, ought we not to take the lesser one? It seems to me a question, whether you ought not to sacrifice a very questionable point of honor, rather than to expose your wife to the severest possible temptations, and perhaps a great deal of harsh criticism."

"I don't see that Ellen is exposed to more temptations while traveling with you, than she would be while living at home with me?" said Morton, inquiringly.

"She will be," replied Mrs. Ellerton. "She will leave you, an offended and indignant woman. I should think it very likely, indeed, that she would be guilty of all sorts of extravagancies, simply from the recklessness which comes from injured pride. Even if she has done wrong, she is nevertheless your wife, and it is your duty to advise and protect her. If you withdraw your protection, and send her away, you will fail in your duty far more seriously than Ellen has done."

"But," returned Morton, "it is hardly necessary for Ellen to act badly, simply because I wish her

to take a short journey, with her own parents. To say that is simply to threaten me, and I am never influenced by threats. No, Mrs. Ellerton, I could not consent to do what I thought unmanly and wrong, even for the sake of keeping Ellen out of mischief. She is not a child, to act always from impulse. If she does act in this way, the sooner she learns to do otherwise, the better for us both. I have thought very seriously about this matter, Mrs. Ellerton, and, believe me, a temporary separation is the only alternative open to us."

"Well," said Mrs. Ellerton, who saw that there was nothing to be gained from Morton in his present mood, "I think you very unyielding, but still it is not necessary for us to decide at once. I hope, after you have thought it over, you will see how much trouble your present determination may cause, and will change your mind. Now, if you are through smoking, perhaps we had better join the others."

"Yes," answered Morton, "I have finished; but before we go, let me say one thing. Several times this winter, Ellen has admitted that she has not acted properly, and each time she has promised to be more considerate. The result of these promises has been that her frivolity has culminated in a scene I can never forget. Now, it seems to me, that there is a time when

repeating that one is sorry, ceases to be a virtue. Ellen has done wrong, and ought to repent it. Saying she is sorry means nothing. Until I see that she really *is* sorry, and will honestly try to be a better wife, I can never trust her again. Now is the time for her to do her part. I have been trying to do mine all winter, whereas the only result of her efforts seems to be that she has treated me with less and less consideration."

"Now let us say nothing more about it, at present," said Mrs. Ellerton, gently. "Perhaps, after all, we can arrange matters without taking such a decided step as you propose."

And the subject of dispute was temporarily laid on the table, so to speak, in appropriate proximity to Morton's half-smoked, but extinguished, cigar; and Mrs. Ellerton and Morton joined the others in the parlor, both occupied by their own projects, and pondering over the difficulties they presented.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN the October following the events of the last chapter, we again find Morton and Lindsley together. Morton had been firm in his resolve, turning a deaf ear to every argument and entreaty which Mrs. Ellerton had been able to urge against his resolution, until at length she had relinquished all attempts at converting him over to her opinion, and had finally decided to accept his decree as inevitable.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton, accompanied by their daughter, had left Boston. From Florida they had traveled slowly northward to Newport, where they had passed the summer; and they were still there, as Morton had seen by the daily papers, the only medium of communication now remaining between him and his wife. Since Ellen's departure, he had received no answer to his letters, and so he himself had finally discontinued his writing.

After his wife had left Boston, Morton had closed the Ellerton house, and taken a lodging with Lindsley, where the two friends had a parlor in common, in which we find them together on the evening we resume the thread of our story.

Lindsley had taken up a medical journal, and was furtively watching Morton, who was pretending to be engrossed in a book, the pages of which, Lindsley noticed, he did not turn. Morton had sunk into a state of melancholy, since his separation from his wife, and had been the theme of Lindsley's anxious study, for all his efforts towards rousing him from his state of lethargy had proved fruitless. At first, Lindsley had endeavored to induce his friend to join his wife in the South, and effect a reconciliation. When this endeavor had proved futile, his next attempt was directed towards weaning him from a habit of self-examination, into which he had fallen; at which times he used to analyze his every feeling and emotion, until Lindsley feared that this tendency was rapidly becoming a morbid one. He had tried to counteract it by inducing his friend to seek that distraction in society, which is a balm to so many. For as a school boy endeavors to assuage the pain caused by the hornet's sting, by applying mud to the afflicted part, so there are those who strive to allay the smarting of their domestic hurts by the application of the mud of society. But Morton had made his mud-pies in his youth. He no longer cared for petty intrigue, nor did it amuse him to play at passion; and the more melancholy he became, the more distasteful appeared to him the companionship of others.

Thus Lindsley's kindly efforts had signally failed, and he had long intended to give his friend a good talking to, as he expressed it, as soon as he should find a suitable opportunity.

Suddenly Lindsley, who had been watching Morton for some time, laid aside his journal, and turning to his friend, who was still looking abstractedly at his book, said, impatiently:—

“Look here, old man, you have been sitting there for half an hour, and have not turned over a page. Is that your idea of an intellectual occupation, or do you find your own thoughts so much more original than Burton's?”

Morton smiled slightly, and laid down his book.

“What an observing fellow you are! I was just thinking that to-day was the anniversary of my wedding-day, and took up that book so you would n't bother me.”

“Then I fancy that you did n't notice the title,” replied Lindsley. “It is Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Strange coincidence!”

Morton did not reply, and Lindsley, after waiting a moment, continued:—

“Yes, it is certainly a strange coincidence! I got that book because you are becoming a monomaniac on the subject of right and duty, and I wanted to study up your case.”

Morton smiled again, deprecatingly, and replied:—

"I am not so badly off as you imagine; it is natural enough that I should be thoughtful to-day."

"It would be natural enough if you had n't been thinking on the same subject for nearly a year, until you had exhausted it in every detail. I used to think that you were of a choleric temperament; now I am beginning to believe that you are melancholy itself. You will bring up in an asylum one of these days, if you don't make an effort to break yourself of this continual brooding upon one subject. Why need you make your life a burden to yourself and to every one else?"

"I don't want to inflict my misfortune on you," replied Morton, haughtily. "If I am as bad as you say, perhaps I had better get a room elsewhere."

"Don't be a fool," said Lindsley, affectionately. "You know well enough what I mean. But seriously, old man, it strikes me that you are playing an ignominious part, by the way you are acting. You have seen fit to make a martyr of yourself, and then you go about making your unhappiness evident to every one who knows you at all. Life is n't worth the purchase, if one takes it as you do. Why don't you 'brace up' and be a man?"

"Well," admitted Morton, "I confess I am unhappy. I have tried to fight this feeling off, but I can't get up an interest in anything."

"Why can't you?" asked Lindsley. "You always used to find occupation enough. You still have the same resources open to you now that you had before you were married."

"Yes," replied Morton, "I have the same resources, but not the same inducements to pursue them. Before, I wanted wealth and fame in order to share them with some one. Then, I had the possibility of the some one, but now, I have not. Now, I am married, but have no wife. Do you know that Ellen has not written to me once since she left Boston?"

"Naturally," replied Lindsley. "I don't think that I should have written in her place. You made the separation. It is for you to make the first move towards reconciliation. Now, old fellow, just look the matter in the face. You are a young man, and in all probability have at least thirty years more to live. You want to live them with the minimum amount of pain, doing, at the same time, the maximum amount of work that is useful to mankind. There is only one thing that you want, and only one way to secure that thing. This way you refuse to take, and therefore this especial object is unobtainable for you. It strikes me as childish and unmanly to be melancholic, simply because there is some one thing which you *can't* have. There are plenty of things which you *can* have. You have your profession for one thing.

That alone ought to be enough, if you would only take a sprinkling of enjoyment in the way of relaxation. You still have ambition enough left to make you aspire to be something more than a dreamer, haven't you?"

"Of course," replied Morton, somewhat angrily; for Lindsley's remarks had touched the right chord this time. Morton, like all ambitious men, despised idlers, and it was wormwood to him to be classed among them, even for a moment. Lindsley noticed his friend's warmth with a little thrill of triumph, and continued, in the same strain:—

"You agree with me in thinking that the highest good a man can attain is that he shall be useful to his fellow-men: each one's usefulness, of course, being measured by his capabilities; but you know, as well as I do, that you are not following out this doctrine at present. To do your best work, you must take some pleasure, in order to prepare your mind for increased exertion, but the pleasure you refuse to take. Instead of unbending, you spend all your leisure time in idle introspection, which in your case is far more injurious than continued work would be. A man may mope and not do any tangible wrong, but still he does no good, and by withholding the good he might do, he does a wrong to mankind, by depriving his fellow-beings

of just so much good as he is capable of performing. Unless your ideas of life are radically changed, you are doing exactly what you consider most unworthy in a man. First, by not doing the best work he is able to turn out, in which respect you fail because you are unwilling to take the relaxation which is essential to the performance of good work; and secondly, because you are unwilling to make your life a happy one, although you consider the end of life happiness. Just think how you are wasting your life! Pretty soon you will be laid in a hole in the ground and your life will have been lived. The first five years of it you were hardly a sentient being; since then half of it has been slept away, and of the waking half, at least one third has been spent in eating, drinking, smoking, and gratifying the appetites. Calculate the time of productive consciousness that is left you, supposing that you live to be sixty years old, and then decide if you can afford to throw away your time in brooding over what might have been. If there is any manliness left in you, it strikes me that it is time for you to 'brace up' and show it, and you ought to begin and get what happiness you can in the short time that is left to you."

Lindsley had spoken rapidly and earnestly, and in his own eagerness he had failed to notice that his friend was beginning to become angry during

the latter part of his harangue. As he ceased speaking, Morton rose abruptly from his chair.

"Now that is enough of this everlasting preaching," said he, angrily. "You have nagged at me steadily for these last seven or eight months. Unless we can get along without any more of it, I shall take steps to procure lodgings elsewhere. The worst of a doctor is that he is always talking shop, and always giving advice, whether it's wanted or not. What are you smoking?"

"Mrs. Wallace's broken wrist," replied Lindsley, gravely.

"What a fellow you are!" said Morton, petulantly; "you can never answer a question seriously."

"But I am perfectly serious," said Lindsley, smiling. "Mrs. Wallace paid me to-day, for setting her broken wrist. I immediately bought a box of cigars on the strength of this accession of fortune, and this is one of them."

"Well, I hope you enjoy it," remarked Morton.

"There is a general impression," said Lindsley, abruptly, disregarding his friend's remark, "there is a general impression that love is an intellectual process. Now I maintain that it is simply an emotion. In other words, I believe it to be nothing but a molecular disturbance amongst the

cells of the brain, and I believe that any one who gives way to the feeling of love simply allows an emotion to get the better of his reasoning faculties."

"Nonsense," said Morton; and hereupon the two young men began a discussion as to the metaphysical nature of love, — a discussion which the reader may be interested to find in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

"You say," said Lindsley, settling himself down for an argument with his friend, delighted that Morton should display an interest in the question — "You say that I exaggerate the materialistic theory as applied to love ; this is really not the case. You say, moreover, that, even supposing I do not exaggerate, you do not believe it ; while to me it seems the only rational belief. Perhaps we do not agree in our definition of love. When I speak of love, I do not mean your placid milk-and-water friendship, which so many people mistake for love : I mean that all-absorbing, engrossing passion which a man or a woman may feel for an individual of the opposite sex, that passion which in its excessive development is capable of warping the soundest judgment, — which may lead to the sacrifice of life itself for the sake of the beloved one, or to the commission of murders and all sorts of crimes in order to attain its object. I do not refer to that love which some people profess to feel for an onion, but to that passion which, next to the desire of self-preservation, is the strongest incentive of all human endeavor."

"So do I," replied Morton. "I fancy that we

both agree upon the definition ; but I maintain, that love is largely an ideal affair, intellectual quite as much as physical."

"Then since we are agreed as to the meaning of our terms, suppose we analyze the matter in an imaginary case," said Lindsley. "A man, in vulgar parlance, falls in love with a woman. Now the philosophical aspect of this fall (and it literally is an ignominious fall from the pinnacles of reason !) is this: The woman, a material object, makes a certain impression upon the man's senses — either upon his sense of sight, or by her personal beauties ; or upon his sense of hearing, by the musical sound of her voice, which produces a sort of electric thrill along his auditory nerve fibres ; or upon his sense of touch, by the pressure of her hand. Perhaps he may have met his divinity for the first time ; but having seen her once and having talked with her for ten minutes, he has learned to care more for her than for any one else in the world. This feeling may be lasting ; it may be ephemeral. It is subject to a vastly different intensity in different individuals. In the present case an impression, more or less deep, has been made upon the man, and this impression we call love. It is really an agitation among certain cells in his brain, produced by the stimulation of his organs of sense. All his knowledge of the object of his affections is derived from his senses ; and what he

feels is therefore an emotion. If the higher attributes of his mind come into play, they are simply exercised in regulating and restraining this feeling. The more engrossing and absorbing his passion becomes, the less he exercises his will and reason in regulating it, and thus the less intellectual his passion will be. Of course the Emotions are intellectual to a certain extent, but they belong to the lowest division of the intellectual hierarchy, and rank only a little above the sensations. Thus love simply represents a molecular disturbance in the nervous matter lying at the base of the brain; and while the man is protesting the strength of his passion and swearing vows of eternal fidelity, though he may call his sentiment love, it really is simply a commotion among the nervous elements of his brain; a sort of intellectual thunder-storm, which carries all before it, and turns his mind inside out, in much the same way that our March winds will reverse an umbrella."

"You speak of man as if he were simply a frog, which St. George Mivart describes as the martyr of science, — a creature expressly designed for physiological experiments."

"And so he is," replied Lindsley, laughing, "if you will but substitute the word psychological for physiological. See how modern society experiments on man's feelings and emotions! He is a

little more highly developed than the frog, but otherwise very like him. But to return to our subject: I could excite precisely the same sensations in you, which the world describes as love, if I could once connect this electric battery here in the corner with your brain cells. The only trouble is, that I should have to make a hole in your skull for the purpose, and you would probably object to such a measure. Love is a physical disturbance in matter. When a man has taken an overdose of it, I should prescribe an antidote in exactly the same way that I should order him to take some caffeine if he had been poisoned by opium."

"Nonsense," said Morton, seriously, but at the same time smiling at his friend's quaint idea. For Morton knew Lindsley thoroughly enough, to appreciate just how much of what he said he really believed. He knew that beneath the levity which characterized his arguments there was still a vein of seriousness which represented the precious metal of his thoughts, and that his whole conversation must be put through the milling process, as it were, before the pure ore was finally extracted from the dross which enclosed it. Arguments like the present one were very common between the two friends, for Morton was as much interested in the theories of modern philosophy as Lindsley, though he looked upon them from a different standpoint. His faith in the teachings of his

childhood were still unshaken by the theories of modern science; while Lindsley, a student of nature, had found his former beliefs insufficient, and had gradually come to discard them.

"Nonsense," said Morton. "I do not admit that we are the automata you believe us, nor do I think your reasoning is sound. Even if a woman is a material object, a man's knowledge of her is ideal. He sees her, not as she is, but as he believes her to be. He experiences certain sensations, which, if you will, are excited by a material object. So far they are material. But on the other hand they are ideal, because they represent an impression conveyed to him by his own idea of the object. His sensations are excited by an external object, but then his conception of that object may be very different from what the object really is. And whatever the object of his affections may be in reality, his mental picture of her is purely an imaginary creation. The imagination belongs in the class of thought, and love is therefore a feeling for an imaginary object, and consequently is purely intellectual, belonging to the highest attribute of mind."

"That sounds plausible," said Lindsley, "and might do for a jury, but it would have been more flattering to me, if you had given me credit for more intelligence. In the first place, you say love is a feeling. If you admit this,

you admit, at once, the truth of what I have said. There is no question as to the position which the feelings occupy among the intellectual faculties. Then, in the second place, your saying that love is a feeling for an imaginary being makes it nothing more or less than a delusion. According to that, the less judgment one exercises in love, the higher would its intellectual standard become! I was arguing seriously."

Morton laughed at Lindsley's injured tone, and replied, apologetically:—

"Lawyers are very apt to address the jury for the sake of gaining time. But seriously, it seems to me that the strongest answer to what you say is the common one; namely, that there is an innate consciousness in every one that man is not a mere machine, turning out ideas and thoughts while his senses turn the crank; man's mind is not like that nail-machine, which is so adapted that it will produce a spike or a tack, at the will of the operator. Every one feels that he is not all common matter, and no amount of experiment on frog's brains will banish this feeling."

"That implies that the feelings are infallible," replied Lindsley, "and this I am not willing to admit. For example, suppose I were to give you a little of this hashish which I have in my desk.

In a few minutes you will be in Paradise, and you will require a keeper to prevent you from committing all sorts of absurdities, though at the time it would be impossible to convince you that you were not responsible for everything you did. But if you committed a dozen murders, I don't believe any jury in the land would hang you."

"What you say," answered Morton, "may be true of that particular state of mind, but such a state is not a normal one."

"What is a normal mind?" asked Lindsley, with the air of one who is about to checkmate his adversary.

"That I can't tell you," replied Morton, "any more than you can tell me what health is, or than you can define insanity."

"And doesn't that show you that health and ill health, sanity and insanity, are separated by an infinitely narrow boundary,—a boundary so narrow, indeed, that we cannot tell where one begins, and the other ends?"

"Yes," admitted Morton.

"Then," said Lindsley, "how can you say when the feelings are reliable guides in any given case? How can you tell that they are not pathologically affected in that very instance upon which you rely for their testimony?"

"You can't," replied Morton; "but neither is

it fair to assume that the feelings of the vast number of those who believe as I do, are all unsound in this respect."

"That may be true," said Lindsley; "but I simply wished to remind you that the consciousness of a power is not proof of its possession, as I showed you in the case of the hashish. A man may say that he is irresistibly impelled to commit some crime, but we all know that the power which leads him on is of his own creation. He has a consciousness of a power, which he really does not possess. Besides, as consciousness is merely a physical disturbance in matter, it is nothing but an effect, and passive, and not an active cause."

"I don't think your conclusions are logical," said Morton; "neither do I believe your premises, though I am willing to admit them for purposes of argument, however horrible they may sound. I challenge you with your own weapons."

"Fire away," said Lindsley; "but I fancy you had better light another cigar before you begin. It will quiet your nerves. It is so seldom that you descend from your high-horse of faith, that I dread the effect which this unusual occurrence may have upon the perturbed protoplasm of your brain cells."

Morton ignored this sally upon a weakness

which he possessed in common with all persons of his beliefs, and replied:—

“Well, then, admitting that all intellectual action is a molecular disturbance, or whatever you may choose to call it, I fail to see what right you have to say that such disturbances are nothing but physical motions in matter. You speak of these motions as if you knew all about them, whereas, on the contrary, you know nothing about them whatsoever. In fact, it may be questioned whether they really exist as we know them through our senses. You may know that they hold good in the case of frogs and other animals which we call unreasoning, but you don’t know really whether these same phenomena take place in man, except from inductive reasoning. Now, tell me frankly, old man, isn’t this true?”

“Yes,” replied Lindsley; “but”—

“Let me go on,” said Morton, interrupting him: “let me present my case, and then we can discuss it afterwards. Now we don’t really know that these disturbances go on, and if they do go on, we don’t know what they *are*, nor do we know by what laws they are governed. So when you say, for example, that the emotion of love is a molecular disturbance at the base of the brain, so far from penetrating more deeply into the subject, you are really becoming more super-

ficial, because you are passing from terms of the known to terms of the unknown. Instead of clearing up the subject, you are clouding it with doubt. Every one has satisfied himself and knows by experience what love is, whereas even the most erudite physiologist doesn't know what a molecular disturbance is! Every one has an idea what love is, and the basis of that idea is actuality, and ultimate conception; but the molecular disturbance you spoke of is an unknown phenomenon. Sensations of pleasure and pain we know by experience, but who knows what a molecular disturbance is? Huxley apparently concludes that since a frog will perform all sorts of automatic actions, after his brain has been removed, that thoughts have very little influence upon our actions!"

Here Morton paused for breath, and Lindsley broke in somewhat eagerly, saying, —

"Well, suppose I admit all this, for the purposes of argument, as you said a moment ago about *my* premises; suppose I admit that all you say is true: Do you, after all, avoid any of the logical consequences of materialism?"

"Why, yes," said Morton. "It seems to me that I do."

"I can't agree with you," replied Lindsley. "It seems to me that whatever view you may take of it, our thoughts and feelings must be

looked upon as simply manifestations of matter; and that being the case, they must be regarded as subject to the laws of matter. It doesn't make any difference whether we look upon them as impressions which material objects make upon the cells of our brains, or go a step farther, and try to define the nature of that impression."

Morton was about to reply, when a knock was heard at the door. Before either of the young men could answer the summons, a neat servant-maid abruptly entered the room, saying, —

"A telegram for Mr. Morton."

Morton rose eagerly from his seat, and took the envelope from the servant, with an almost feverish haste; for there are times when a telegram seems an almost certain herald of misfortune, and the moment Morton caught sight of the yellow envelope, he felt a presentiment that this one had brought painful tidings.

"It is from Newport," said he, and he read aloud the following despatch: —

"'Ellen dangerously ill. Come at once.'"

Morton dropped the despatch, and turned to his friend with something of the old energy in his manner that Lindsley had sought for in vain, during the few months the friends had passed together.

"It is nine o'clock," he said, looking at his watch: "I can catch the 9.30 train. Will you see

about the carriage, while I am getting my things together?"

The few necessary preparations were hastily made, and fifteen minutes had scarcely elapsed before the friends were in the carriage, on their way to the station.

"Good-bye, old man," said Morton, wringing Lindsley's hand, on the platform of the station; "good-bye. I may have been in the wrong, though now I can't realize exactly how. But if I have made a mistake, I feel as if there were a terrible punishment in store for me."

And the train, slowly starting with a groan, emblematic of Morton's feelings, steamed heavily from the station, bearing the husband towards his wife, his mind torn with all the doubts and terrors of uncertainty.

CHAPTER XX.

It was past the hour of midnight when Morton drove up to the Ellertons' cottage at Newport, but in spite of the lateness of the hour the lights were still burning throughout the house, and their brightness shining out into the darkness seemed to extend to the anxious young man a certain hope that the worst had not yet come to pass.

Morton waited until his carriage had disappeared in the darkness, before he ascended the steps and rang the bell.

The door was almost immediately opened by Mr. Ellerton himself, who, still completely dressed, had evidently been expecting his son-in-law.

"We expected you by this train," said he, coldly, without deigning to notice the hand which Morton had extended towards him. "Come in." Morton mechanically entered the house and paused in the hall where he set down his valise; but Mr. Ellerton without stopping led the way into the parlor. When Morton had entered the room, Mr. Ellerton quietly and cautiously closed the door, and seated himself, motioning to Morton to do the same.

Morton drew a chair up near his father-in-law's,

in silence, and for a few moments neither spoke. Morton feared to broach the question he longed to ask, dreading he knew not what calamity, while Mr. Ellerton who had the air of one who has an unpleasant task before him, seemed to be at a loss to know exactly how he should begin. At last, the silence was broken by Mr. Ellerton, who said in a constrained voice, which contrasted strangely with his customary pompous and carefully modulated tones: —

“Mr. Morton, both Mrs. Ellerton and I are disposed to forget the past, notwithstanding that we agree in thinking you have treated our daughter very inconsiderately, to say the least; and with unnecessary harshness and cruelty, for a very venial error. Ellen, however, is not aware that you have been summoned to Newport, and I am free to confess to you that we should not have taken upon ourselves the responsibility incurred by this procedure had it not been that a terrible catastrophe has occurred, of which my daughter, as yet, is happily unconscious.”

“Do not keep me in suspense,” said Morton, anxiously. “Tell me the worst at once. Is Ellen dying?”

“No,” replied Mr. Ellerton. Then noticing Morton’s look of relief, he continued: “Ellen is ill, but no more so than a young mother usually is with an infant daughter, four hours old, lying in the next room.”

"What!" exclaimed Morton, completely taken aback by this altogether unexpected announcement. "A daughter?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Ellerton. "A daughter, born at half-past eight o'clock this evening."

For a moment, Morton could not gather together his ideas to reply; the surprise which this announcement had caused overpowered every other feeling. Such a thing as this had never occurred to him, and Mr. Ellerton's sudden declaration completely paralyzed his speech. Old memories flooded through his mind with an overwhelming rush, and he thought with poignant regret how all his difficulties and troubles might have been avoided by the simple suggestion of the possibility of this event.

Mr. Ellerton considerably waited a few moments to enable Morton to overcome the shock of this sudden revelation, and then continued, breaking in upon his abstraction, by again reiterating:—

"Yes, you have a daughter, born this evening, and Ellen is doing well."

But in spite of the reassuring character of these words, there was a suggestive coldness in Mr. Ellerton's tone which Morton could not fail to recognize. He vaguely surmised that there was some greater surprise still in store for him and he was impatient to know the worst.

"Why do you call it a misfortune?" he asked,

quickly. "To me it seems the happiest thing that could have happened."

"Because of the child," said Mr. Ellerton, slowly, suppressing an involuntary shudder of repulsion, and tightly compressing his lips.

"Pray tell me the worst at once," cried Morton, earnestly. "Is the baby dead? or what is the matter?"

"It is deformed," said Mr. Ellerton, slowly.

"Good God!" cried Morton, starting from his chair, "what do you mean?"

"Simply what I say," replied Mr. Ellerton, looking at him calmly, and speaking with a shade of bitterness in his tone: "that Ellen's daughter, my only grandchild, the only descendant of my race, is so hopelessly and hideously deformed, that I would rather have seen my daughter lying dead in the next room, than believe that this ignominious thing could have happened in my family."

Morton fell back heavily in his chair, while Mr. Ellerton was expressing these paternal sentiments. An impervious cloud seemed to have settled down over his mind, and he knew not which way to turn to emerge from the doubts which beset his path. At length, making a great effort to regain his self-possession, he said, slowly:—

"I must see the child."

"That will be best," replied Mr. Ellerton, rising from his chair, evidently relieved by the prospect

of throwing the burden of further disclosure on Morton's shoulders. "I could not find words to describe this thing, and even if I could, you would not believe me. Come with me — I will show it to you." With these words, Mr. Ellerton led the way out of the parlor, and up the stairs, closely followed by his son-in-law.

Before the door of one of the chambers, Mr. Ellerton halted, and having glanced back to see that he was accompanied by Morton, and that no one else was near, he knocked gently at the door, which was immediately opened by a stout elderly woman, whose snowy cap and apron, and purring manner of composure and self-esteem, instantly proclaimed her, even to the inexperienced eyes of Morton, as that most exalted and important functionary — a monthly nurse. She courtesied to the two gentlemen with a grim smile of conscious power, and standing aside, held the door open for them to enter.

"Mrs. Mott," said Mr. Ellerton, deferentially, for even he was awed by her stupendous self-complacency, "this is Mr. Morton."

Morton bowed to the nurse, seeing that she looked upon this introduction as a necessary formality, while she, with the air of a queen receiving the allegiance of a subject, smiled condescendingly in return, and said, graciously: —

"And Mr. Morton would like to see the baby?"

She is a good little thing, just as quiet as a lamb, and so ladylike! Why, she's been awake this long while, but lays just as still, — she's too 'cute to make a fuss and wake up all the folks."

At one side of the room, which was a large one, and most luxuriously furnished, was a spacious bedstead, whose brass frame shone like burnished gold, in the subdued light of the room, which was not so dark, however, as to obscure from view an exquisite French bassinette which, with its costly lace canopy, stood by the bedside.

Mrs. Mott, with the air of a showman who is about to exhibit some rare, but dangerous beast, walked stealthily up to this bassinette, and gently withdrew an embroidered shawl which was artfully disposed over the top in such a manner as to admit only so much air as was necessary for the tender little creature it served to protect. Morton, scarcely breathing, approached the cradle on tiptoe, while each reflection of light from the burnished brass of the bedstead seemed a glittering eye, which coldly and critically contemplated his advance — a malicious eye, which gleamed in contemplation of the pain it was about to witness. Silently he motioned to the nurse to stand aside, and then, turning in such a way that neither Mr. Ellerton nor the nurse could see his face, he looked down upon his child.

There, pillowed upon the most expensive lace,

surrounded by every luxury which money could buy, and tender maternal forethought could procure, was a *negro child*, its little black face turned upwards. The child was awake, and the curious dull eyes of early infancy stared up at Morton with their blank and vacant gaze — a gaze which seemed laden with a terrible reproach to the father, for the life of humiliation which must inevitably be its lot. One little black hand was lying above the curly head, in a position of unconscious grace, while the other, resting upon the creamy lace of its delicate dress, displayed with a terrible contrast the ebony hue of the African race.

As Morton looked down upon his child, he would have thanked God if he could have died there by its cradle, so great was his agony. For that he himself was in some way responsible for this terrible deformity, he did not for an instant doubt.

How long he stood there, looking down upon his child, unconscious to all about him, like one in a dream, he never knew, till Mr. Ellerton took him by the arm, and led him down the stairs and into the parlor again.

"Now, Mr. Morton," said Mr. Ellerton, resuming his seat, and speaking in a cold and pitiless way, so that his very words seemed to be born of pride and coldness, "shall I leave you to yourself

for a time, or are you in a condition to discuss with me this perplexing business?"

At the sound of his father-in-law's voice, Morton waked from his reverie. He looked inquiringly at Mr. Ellerton for a moment, and then vacantly asked:—

"What did you say?"

"I asked you," said Mr. Ellerton, rather more kindly than before, "whether you would prefer to talk this matter over now, or whether I had better leave you for a while?"

"My God!" exclaimed Morton, "say that this is a ghastly joke, a scheme to punish me. Say what you will, but for God's sake tell me that this creature is not Ellen's child."

"I fear there can be no doubt of that," said Mr. Ellerton, "though I would give my life to believe such was not the case."

"But it is impossible!" cried Morton. "Such a thing as this is past belief. There must be some mistake."

"No," replied Mr. Ellerton; "it is a ghastly fact which admits no doubt. But its explanation is another matter. Doctor Washburn has explained this incomprehensible fact, to his own satisfaction at least. He says that some one of your ancestors must have been a negro, and calls this a remarkable example of that law of inheritance, where the child does not resemble either of

its parents, but goes back to some grandparent, or great-grandparent. If we only knew about your parentage, we should be in a position to judge whether this is true."

"Curse my parents!" exclaimed Morton. "Curse them! My only hope is, that they may endure the agony and shame they have made me bring upon you all."

"But," said Mr. Ellerton, deprecatingly, for strong language seemed to him the excess of bad form, "this is simply a conjecture. We do not even know that it is the case, until we hear from the clergyman, your former guardian. What was his name?"

"Hamilton. Damn him!" replied Morton, with heat. "Had it not been for his cursed sophistries, I should never have asked your daughter to become my wife. Now I have brought disgrace and dishonor upon the only people in the world I love."

"If we are going to talk at all," said Mr. Ellerton, calmly, unruffled by Morton's outburst, "let us discuss the matter like rational beings. If nobody knows of the birth of this black child, we shall avoid much of the misfortune it has caused. But we certainly are in what I may call an excessively ugly predicament, and we ought to decide at once upon what we shall do. It is unavailing for us to waste our time

in useless regrets. Let us rather consider how we are to extricate ourselves from the difficulties which surround us. The first thing for us to do is to telegraph to Mr. Hamilton, and ask him to come to Newport. Then with his assistance, we can finally decide upon the course we ought to pursue. So far nobody knows about this child excepting ourselves, Doctor Washburn, and the nurse."

"Does Ellen know?" asked Morton, abruptly.

"No," replied Mr. Ellerton. "She was told that Doctor Washburn had forbidden her to see the baby, and she was too weak to insist, as I feared she might."

"Has Ellen spoken of me?" again inquired Morton.

"No," replied Mr. Ellerton; then changing the subject somewhat abruptly, he continued: "Now Mr. Morton let us have this matter of Mr. Hamilton settled at once, for it is very late. Will you telegraph him, or shall I?"

"I will," said Morton, and then looking at his watch he continued: "It is now four o'clock, and I will telegraph at once. How soon do you think I may see Ellen?"

"That is not for me to decide," replied Mr. Ellerton, stiffly. "Doctor Washburn will be here at eight o'clock. You must consult him."

Mr. Ellerton spoke so abruptly that Morton

did not attempt to press the subject further, but rising from his chair, he bade Mr. Ellerton good-night; and hurried off to telegraph to Washington, relieved by the prospect of active employment, and an opportunity for thinking in quiet and alone over the startling events which had happened so unexpectedly. The surprise caused by Mr. Ellerton's sudden revelation had been so profound as to produce in Morton's mind a state of shock, analogous to that condition of physical shock which follows severe bodily injury: a shock which, by paralyzing the intellectual centres, has the benignant effect of deadening the pain.

CHAPTER XXI.

A FEW hours later as Doctor Washburn came down stairs after his morning visit to the young mother, he was greeted by Mr. Ellerton, who led him into the library where Morton was impatiently awaiting them. Morton came forward as they entered the room. "How is Mrs. Morton?" he asked, eagerly, of the doctor.

"Very well, indeed," replied the physician, "but anxious to see her child. I fear that it will be a very difficult matter for us to keep her in ignorance much longer. We must decide what is to be done at once;" and Doctor Washburn, as if to collect and arrange his thoughts, began pacing the room in a restless, energetic way which was characteristic of the man. Both his hands were thrust deeply into his trousers pockets, his eyes were bent on the floor, and his whole appearance was one of intense absorption. Doctor Washburn was a type of physician with which the reader is perhaps familiar. He was of an extremely argumentative turn of mind, and usually inclined to the side of the opposition. It was never sufficient for him to be told that a certain thing was true. He must learn all the reasons for believing it to be true,

and he never accepted any statement as a fact without knowing all the reasons for believing it to be a fact, and without being convinced of their validity. This rule he applied to everything which occurred in his daily life. He was naturally sceptical and his medical training had made him still more so, until the simplest assertion was to him, as he expressed it, a matter of opinion in regard to a matter of fact. On social and political questions he was a radical of the reddest dye; upon religious subjects a materialist, believing in nothing, as he was wont to say, except in himself, and in the doctrine of total annihilation. But in spite of his extreme opinions he was universally trusted and respected, and as Mr. Ellerton, who had seated himself, watched the physician in his nervous walk, he congratulated himself that he could depend upon this self-reliant man for assistance and advice.

After Doctor Washburn had made several turns of the room, in deep silence, he suddenly paused before Morton, who was gazing vacantly out of the window.

"Mr. Morton," said he, abruptly, taking the initiative, "do you know to a certainty that there is no African blood in your family?"

"No," replied Morton, somewhat startled by the question. "I know nothing about my family whatever."

"Very good," replied the doctor. Then continuing less abruptly, in a manner which suggested the substitution of courtesy in the place of scientific interest, he said: "Of course, all that we now say is to be regarded as strictly *inter nos*, and you need have no hesitation in speaking frankly to me. Anything that may be said in my presence I shall regard as a professional confidence." Here the doctor paused, and taking the glasses from his nose, began polishing them carefully, looking at Morton steadily in the meantime. "In my own mind," he continued, "there is no doubt that some one of your ancestors, either in the direct or some collateral line, was of African origin. Cases of this nature are mentioned by Darwin, who says that under such circumstances the children are sometimes piebald, or more frequently either purely white or black. It is an example of that extraordinary law of inheritance, known as atavism, by which a child does not resemble either of its parents, but reverts to some ancestor more or less remote. Is there no way in which we may positively learn whether you have not had some negro ancestor?"

"Yes," replied Morton, "we can probably learn all particulars from my former guardian. I telegraphed to him this morning, and I have no doubt that he will be here to-morrow."

"Good," replied the doctor again. "Then we

can expect the elucidation of this problem from him. Mr. Ellerton has already told me about your peculiar relations with your parents, and, as it is one of the laws of inheritance, you know, that a child usually inherits from its parent of the opposite sex, I assume that the difficulty is on your side rather than upon Mrs. Morton's."

Here the doctor paused, and looked somewhat maliciously at Mr. Ellerton, who hastened to reply, in his most pompous and consequential manner:—

"That you may safely assume. I know all particulars relating to every member of the Ellerton and the Sutherland families, and I can positively assure you that nothing of this kind was ever known in the history of either of these families."

Mr. Ellerton's greatest foible, as we have said, was family pride; over his library-table was suspended the Ellerton Family Chart, which set forth how, in remote times, a certain D'Ellerton, a good knight and true, had pushed his fortunes into England with William the Conqueror's band, and which showed conclusively (to some) that from this knight the Ellerton Family was descended.

Can it be that History lies when she tells us of the paucity of the numbers of that Norman host which achieved the overthrow of Harold on that memorable field of Hastings? Or are we to infer that some mistake has been made by some of the thousands who trace their ancestry back to

different knights in William's train? Perhaps some of these aspirants for genealogical distinction may have confused sutlers and camp-followers with stainless knights. In this way, we might account, not only for the apparent inconsistencies between private and public archives, but also for those otherwise inexplicable traits which these alleged descendants seem to have sometimes inherited.

Be this as it may, however, Mr. Ellerton had pretensions to illustrious birth which he carefully fostered. Doctor Washburn, on the contrary, was ostentatiously and aggressively a member of the middle class. When I say middle class, do not imagine that I have reference to that great and growing denomination of American citizens, who should be described under the head of the *Middle-Name Class*,—that class of praiseworthy individuals, who, stigmatized at birth by some harsh and ill-sounding Christian name, are wont to hide the initial of the offending appellation before the shadow of a more euphonious middle name which follows. S. Atherton Gilbert, and J. Ponsonby Cross, certainly fall more lightly on the ear, than Silas A. Gilbert, and Jeremiah P. Cross, and it is far from my desire to underestimate these worthy people, because they happen to have been considerate of the more refined tastes of their neighbors. Doctor Washburn was a member of that class of self-made men who are supposed to constitute

the brains and sinews of our great republic. His father had kept a small shop in a suburban town near Boston, and the larger part of his life had been passed in dispensing groceries and Yankee notions, to his village customers. Like many of his class, he hated the "Big-bugs," as he was wont to call his more pretentious neighbors, and his son, though not quite agreeing with all his father's prejudices, had been imbued, from youth upward, with such a profound contempt for American "Old Families," that he seldom let pass an opportunity for making some sarcastic allusion to them. Mr. Ellerton's eager explanation, and his complacent glance at the family tree, caused a whimsical smile to draw the corners of the doctor's mouth slightly upward, but he quickly repressed any inclination which on another occasion might have tempted him to an overt act of risibility, and continued, gravely,—

"Such an ancestry as I suspect, Mr. Morton, is not sufficient in itself to account for your parents' behavior towards you. You were told that they had other children, and that the reason which made your removal from home advisable did not hold good in regard to them. Now if you are merely separated from your parents because of some colored ancestor, the same reason would hold good in regard to your brothers and sisters."

"I have considered every possible contingency," replied Morton, in answer to the doctor's reasoning, "and I can tell you beforehand, that there is no use in speculating about the matter. Let us rather consider what it is best for us to do in our present predicament."

"I was coming to that," replied Doctor Washburn. "You must pardon a doctor for first studying his cases in their professional aspect. Whatever the cause of your removal from your family may have been, we shall learn it when your guardian comes, if he will only be frank with us. In the meantime, let me know what you wish to do about the child. Do you propose to keep its color secret?"

"Can we do so?" asked Mr. Ellerton, eagerly. "I must say that I dread nothing so much as the talk and criticism this child's birth will create, if it once becomes public. It will get into the newspapers: I shall be interviewed by reporters and special correspondents, and very likely the baby's picture will figure in the illustrated magazines. Then the separation of husband and wife will be freely discussed, and all that is sacred must be given to the public. Such publicity would be terrible enough to me; I fear it would kill my wife and daughter. In short, secrecy seems to me absolutely essential. Then again, will it not be the best thing for the

child, that we should conceal her parentage? With this terrible affliction, she never can occupy the position in society to which her birth, as my granddaughter, has entitled her. In such surroundings she would be jeered at, shunned, and pitied, whereas in obscurity, she would occupy the same position as other black children. Come, Morton, let us hear what you think."

Mr. Ellerton spoke eagerly, and almost querulously, for he did not know to what extremes Morton's ideas of duty might carry him, and the idea of publicity was terrible to him,—the more so, as such publicity would bring ridicule upon his family name.

Morton looked at his father-in-law questioningly, as if at a loss to account for his unusual animation, and the eager entreaty betrayed by his voice.

"Can we be sure of keeping the nature of this deformity secret, if we decide upon trying?" he replied, slowly.

"Yes," interrupted Doctor Washburn, "I think we can. Nobody knows the baby is black except Mrs. Mott, Mrs. Ellerton, and ourselves, so that the nurse is practically the only person whose discretion we have reason to doubt. I have been talking with her this morning about the baby. She does not consider its being black nearly as remarkable as a case of hers, in which

the baby had a claw like a lobster's, caused, she says, by its mother's having been bitten by a lobster, eleven years before the birth of her child. She accounts for this child's color, by your 'sojourn among the negroes,' and as she does not consider it a marvel, she is far less likely to prattle about it, though that class of humanity is very much swayed by the cheap distinction one may get from association with anything miraculous. I would be willing to answer for her secrecy, if she had a small annuity guaranteed to her so long as the affair remains unknown. Yes, we can certainly conceal it, if you desire to do so."

Doctor Washburn concluded his remarks very abruptly, as Morton had suddenly jumped up in the midst of them, and begun pacing the room rapidly.

"I see it all," said he, impulsively, breaking in upon the doctor's words. "I must be a white child, born of negro parents. That explains it all. My parents are black, and I resemble some white ancestor! My God! if I had only thought of it before!"

Morton's words carried conviction with them. This suggestion once made, neither of his listeners for a moment doubted that it was the true solution of the mystery of his birth—of that enigma which had perplexed them all; and in

realizing that this was true, all three men, as if simultaneously, were struck with another doubt. Both the doctor and Mr. Ellerton remained silent, looking significantly at each other. Neither could bring himself to speak, both feeling that it was Morton's place to suggest the new difficulty which complicated their decision. Morton did not disappoint their expectations, for after a moment's delay he began, speaking very thoughtfully, —

“Yes, that is unquestionably the reason of my parents' secrecy. I can almost see them discussing the matter of my disposal with Mr. Hamilton, as we are now deliberating about their grandchild with Doctor Washburn here. But we have an example before us, that I fancy my parents could not have had; otherwise they would have acted differently. What you wish me to do with my child, is precisely what my parents did with theirs. Do you think the course they pursued with me has proved a judicious one?”

“But, my dear sir,” broke in Mr. Ellerton, excitedly, “pray consider the matter without sentiment. How is my daughter to acknowledge a black child?”

“You misunderstand me, Mr. Ellerton,” replied Morton, coldly. “My meaning is that my parents by concealing my birth have involved many others in misery, and that we must take

care lest we may be guilty of the same wrong. Let us conceal the child's birth, by all means, but not as my parents concealed mine. It shall be concealed from the public, but from the public alone. Henceforth it shall be my task to protect her. But I shall take her away from this country, and you need not fear that you shall be subjected to further humiliation." Then turning to the doctor, he asked:—

"Do you believe I can take this child away without the secret becoming known?"

"Yes," replied the physician, thoughtfully. "I have been thinking about it ever since the child was born. I had no doubt you would eventually decide upon concealing its deformity. It can be done, but I will not disguise from you that it will be a very difficult matter. If we do it at all, we must make up our minds to do it thoroughly. We can have no half-way measures, for if it is clumsily managed, it will be sure to leak out one way or another, and will be likely to lead to a public scandal. Now let me ask you a question in turn: Is Mrs. Morton to be acquainted with the facts?"

"By no means," exclaimed Mr. Ellerton, excitedly. "It would kill my daughter if she knew that her child was a negress."

"Does Mr. Morton agree with this decision?" asked Doctor Washburn, pitying Morton too sincerely to address his question directly to him.

"Yes," replied Morton, quietly, "I suppose so, for the present, at any rate."

"Then, Mr. Ellerton, may I ask what you propose to tell Mrs. Morton, when she insists upon seeing the baby, as she will in a day or two at the farthest?"

"Tell her what you please," answered Mr. Ellerton. "So long as it is agreed that the whole matter is to be kept secret, I am willing to leave all the details to you. You, as a physician, are much more competent to decide upon such matters than we are. Mr. Morton and I will simply agree that the child's birth is to remain a secret, and will empower you to arrange all details as you think best for the mother."

"Very good," replied the physician; "and now Mr. Morton, will you tell me what you desire?"

"I agree with Mr. Ellerton, though I hope it will not be necessary for us to deceive Mrs. Morton. It is her child, even if it is black. But, Doctor Washburn, do you think it would be safe to tell her the whole story at present?"

"Decidedly not," answered the doctor.

"In that case," replied Morton, "I consent to Mr. Ellerton's plan of leaving it to you. I am ready to rely implicitly on your judgment."

"Then," continued the doctor, "I understand that you both agree to leave the matter entirely to me?"

Both Morton and Mr. Ellerton nodded approval, and the doctor continued: "What you propose can be managed in such a way that no suspicion need be excited. But, as I said before, it will be a very difficult matter; so difficult, in fact, that I am unwilling to be a party to it, unless it is distinctly understood beforehand, that all the details of the affair are to be decided and arranged by me."

"I can see no objection to that," said Mr. Ellerton, graciously. "In fact, the less I know about the matter personally, the better I shall be pleased."

"Very good," said the doctor. "I will agree to arrange everything; I will guarantee that all shall go smoothly, provided you will each give me your word of honor in no wise to interfere in whatever I may consider necessary. You are simply to decide upon what day Mr. Morton, if he continues in his determination of going away, shall take his child. Everything else is to be left absolutely with me, and you are to agree to assist me, if I am obliged to call upon you?"

"I am quite ready to accede to your desire," said Mr. Ellerton, with the air of one who confers a favor, "and Mr. Morton, I am sure, will say the same thing."

"Yes," replied Morton, "I, too, am glad to accept the doctor's terms, unless Mr. Hamilton should suggest something better. But let us pro-

ceed on the assumption that we shall do what Doctor Washburn suggests, for every day's delay lessens our chances of success. Pray make your arrangements, so that I may take away the baby to-morrow night. Then, if we decide to act upon your plan, I will give you my word of honor to acquiesce in what you propose, in every particular. In the meantime, Mr. Hamilton will arrive, and he may throw some new light on the question."

"Good," said Doctor Washburn again. "Then we will consider it settled as far as this: If any concealment is to be practised, it is to be done as I may direct. And now," continued he, "I must leave you, as I have much to attend to. Is there anything else I can do? If so, command me."

"No," replied Morton, "I don't think of anything else, unless you can tell me how soon I may safely see Mrs. Morton. Of course, I know it is not as if I had been with her from the first."

"You ought not to see her for some time," said the doctor, shielding himself behind an evasive answer, after the manner of physicians. "Any excitement might be hazardous, and I must insist upon absolute quiet for a few days, at least."

After the expression of these conventional sentences, the doctor waited for a few moments. Then seeing there was nothing more to be said, he hurried off, leaving Morton alone with his father-in-law and the family tree.

CHAPTER XXII.

As the door closed behind Doctor Washburn, Morton, who had been standing during the latter part of the interview, resumed his seat opposite Mr. Ellerton, who was still in his chair beneath the shade of the Ellerton tree.

"If I cannot see Ellen for two or three days," said Morton, gloomily, "I don't see how I am to see her at all, as I take the child away at once."

"Very true," said Mr. Ellerton. "But then I really do not see that any end will be accomplished if you do see her at all, if you actually mean to put your ridiculous project of expatriation into execution. Ellen certainly ought not to consent to abandon her home, her friends, and her social advantages, merely for the sake of this child, which after all is more yours than hers. If she did contemplate such a step, I should consider it my duty, under the circumstances, to use all my influence to dissuade her from taking it. It is quixotic enough for you to abandon all your hopes in life, for the sake of what I may call this anomalous child; it would be infinitely more so for my daughter. Why isn't it just as well for you to follow your parents' example? Why can't you,

by correcting the mistakes which were made in your own case, and by profiting by your own experiences, shield your child from unhappiness just as well here as you could in a foreign land? If necessary, you could see her from time to time, and superintend her education personally. In my opinion this is all that could reasonably be expected of you."

"It does seem so at first sight," replied Morton; "but if I should do as you advise, I should merely be exposing my child to the same vicissitudes that I myself have known. And the knowledge that this was the case would be a constant source of reproach to me. I know the bitterness of such a life as I have lived. Suppose that after she grew up, she should marry a colored man and should have a white child; I would simply have transferred my burden to my child's shoulders. Then if she shirked her duty, as you advise me to shirk mine, this unfortunate inheritance might go on into another generation. No, Mr. Ellerton; some one must take a stand, and I am the one to take it. If my parents had done what I propose doing, we should have been spared the necessity of this discussion. Shall we bequeath a similar necessity to another generation? No. I must keep a watch over my child and guard against every possibility of her marriage."

"But," said Mr. Ellerton, "for the first five or

six years of her life, at any rate, nothing like what you propose is necessary. She can be cared for by a nurse, paid for the purpose, just as well as she could be under your direct supervision. She certainly can't marry at that age ; neither can she be taught anything to speak of, and during that time, something might happen to render your proposed sacrifice unnecessary. I do not wish to appear unfeeling, but still we ought to consider every possible contingency, and among them is the likelihood that this child will not survive. Doctor Washburn expressly said that one of its lungs was not at all what it should be, and he also remarked, that such children as these are seldom robust."

"That may be very true," rejoined Morton ; "but nevertheless, it is an hideous idea that a father should make all his plans hinge on the possibility of his child's premature death. Suppose she should not die, how would he stand then ? Of course it would be foolish for me to profess any love for this baby ; but I do feel an infinite compassion for her, and as for repudiating her, or leaving her among strangers, I will never consent to it. It is no fault of mine that she is black, but she may have derived her misfortune *through* me, and I will never forsake her on account of it."

Even if our lives are so devoted to the expedient that duty is a means and not an end, it is

hard to argue against such sentiments as these, especially when we know that they are sincere, and Mr. Ellerton did not reply to Morton's speech, although this decision was in direct opposition to his own views.

As Morton regarded the matter, it was at best a question between his duty to himself, and his duty to his child, that he was called upon to decide ; if he erred, it was only by being less generous to himself than to his child.

But then, on the other hand, there were others to be considered besides Morton and his child ; and Mr. Ellerton saw in this determination of Morton the total destruction of Ellen's interests. For he felt perfectly convinced that Ellen would go to the ends of the world, if she thought she could be happy with her husband again ; and believing that a reconciliation was inevitable, he dreaded not only that he should lose his daughter, if she were to accompany her husband into his proposed exile, but also that his daughter should lose those social surroundings, which he himself so unduly prized.

Next to his pride, his desire for his daughter's happiness was perhaps the strongest feeling in his nature, and he honestly believed that she could never be happy in such a life as Morton had proposed for himself. But Mr. Ellerton knew, what Morton did not know, that Ellen was still passion-

ately in love with her husband. He knew that it was her pride alone which had hitherto kept her from a reconciliation with him; for during the months which his daughter, since her separation from her husband, had passed with him, he had been sufficiently observing to recognize that the only thing which had supported her through the trials of her temporary widowhood, had been the conviction that the birth of her child would bring Morton to her feet again.

If Morton went away without seeing his wife, Mr. Ellerton dreaded the effect which this shattering of her hopes might have upon Ellen, while on the other hand, if Morton should see her, he dreaded lest in the first flush of renewed happiness, Ellen should consent to accompany him into exile, and thus abandon all that, in his mind, made life worth living. Such, then, was Mr. Ellerton's difficulty. The only solution of it seemed to him to be, that he should persuade Morton to relinquish his determination, though how this was to be accomplished, he did not see. The best plan would be to make Morton promise that he would not permit Ellen to accompany him in his exile. Once reconciled to Ellen, Mr. Ellerton believed Morton would rather abandon the child than forsake the wife so lately regained.

Thus Mr. Ellerton, who was absorbed in his own reveries, and was pondering as to how he

could best extort some such promise from Morton, did not reply to his son-in-law's last observation, and the latter believing, from his father-in-law's silence, that he was convinced of the truth of what he had said, resumed:—

“If the child had been blind, or deformed in any ordinary way, you yourself, Mr. Ellerton, would have been the first to say that I should be base to desert her. How much more ignoble it would be to abandon her now, when the only reason would be a deformity which is derived directly through me. No, Mr. Ellerton, I must take my child under my own protection, and immediately. I had hoped to see Ellen before I went away, but perhaps it will be better to postpone seeing her for the present. I dare say it would only make us more unhappy than we are, and nothing would be gained by it.”

“But you cannot perfect your proposed arrangements,” said Mr. Ellerton, persistently, “within a week, at any rate. Why is it not possible for you to leave the child in New York, and to come back and see Ellen before your departure?”

“That was my intention,” said Morton, somewhat irascibly, for Mr. Ellerton, when so disposed, could be extremely exasperating, not so much by what he said, as by his manner of saying it. “I shall, of course, insist upon seeing my wife,” continued he, decidedly, “before I finally go away.”

Now it remains for me to decide upon my future residence. Where should you advise me to go?"

"I don't advise you to go," replied Mr. Ellerton, brusquely. "On the contrary, I advise you to stay where you are. I regard your whole plan as a quixotic piece of obstinacy. At all events, it is absurd for you to think of going away until the child is at least six years old."

"But," replied Morton, "it would be more than human nature could bear, to stay here five years with the thought of exile at the end of that time constantly before me,—to know that at a given time I must give up my friends, my country, my profession, and indeed everything that I value, to lead the life which will then be before me. The longer I stay, the more interests I shall have; the longer I stay, the harder it will be to go. No, if I am to go at all, I must go at once; or, at least, as soon as I can make my arrangements."

"Then don't go at all," said Mr. Ellerton, warmly; "if you don't think of yourself, think of Ellen. My daughter's happiness is of quite as much importance as yours can be."

"I do think of Ellen," replied Morton, bitterly. "If I didn't, I should never have courage enough to do my duty by this child. Can you not see that it's as much for Ellen's sake as for the child's that I am ready to give up everything in this way?"

"No," said Mr. Ellerton, "I can't see anything of the kind, and I have never considered myself an obtuse person. But if you do go away with this child, as you propose, promise me, at least, that you will not take my daughter with you. As her husband, you perhaps may have a right to insist upon her sacrificing herself in this way, but promise me that you *will not* do so. After the humiliation you have brought upon this family, I think I have the right to demand this promise of you."

"You do not know me, Mr. Ellerton, but if your nature demands such a promise, I will gladly give it to you."

Mr. Ellerton accepted this rebuke without a retort, as indeed he could readily afford to do. He had accomplished the object he had in view; he felt that the end had justified the means and having got what he desired, he could afford to be lenient. But, after all, his motive was a good one, for he believed that when Morton and his wife were reunited, Morton would give up his wild plan when he realized that to put it into execution would be to part again from the wife so lately regained; and when this realization came, Mr. Ellerton believed that he should have secured his daughter's eventual happiness. So, perfectly satisfied with himself, he ignored Morton's re-

buke, with unexpected forbearance, and said: "I do not see that a continuation of this conversation is of any use. Let us adjust our present difficulties, before creating new ones. It will be more suitable to discuss these other questions when Mr. Hamilton arrives and confirms our conjectures, or otherwise, as the case may be."

And with such a gesture as His Holiness might use towards a luckless penitent who had kissed his toe too roughly, Mr. Ellerton put an end to this conversation, which involved the future of the black grandchild of the last of the name of Ellerton. And the family tree neither drooped its branches nor bowed its haughty head at the colloquy it had overheard.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was very early in the morning, when Morton's telegram was carried to Mr. Hamilton's house in Washington, and the clergyman was still in bed when he received it. As soon as he had read it, he recalled the promise he had made to Morton, and at once made up his mind to lose no time in complying with its urgent appeal, and setting everything else aside, he hastened to take the train for New York, where he arrived in season to catch the night-boat for Newport.

There was one point upon which Mr. Hamilton particularly prided himself—his knowledge of men; and he had sufficiently studied Morton's character on their single interview to feel assured that it was a matter of no trivial importance which had prompted him to send that telegram eloquent in its brevity.

As the boat approached her landing, Mr. Hamilton went down upon the forward deck and amused himself by scanning the faces of the numerous people who were gathered upon the wharf, and among the expectant throng, towering above the rest of the crowd, he descried the tall form of Morton.

That Morton was at the wharf to meet *him*, he could not doubt, and the eager expression on the face of his former ward strengthened his conviction that something of unusual gravity had occurred. Morton did not seem to recognize him, and he looked so anxious as he stood there gazing from one passenger to another, that Mr. Hamilton could not refrain from calling to him by name. Morton, catching the sound of the clergyman's voice, speedily discovered him amidst the throng of passengers who were crowding the deck, and shouted out a reply, and the expression of relief which passed over his features when he recognized Mr. Hamilton amply repaid that gentleman for all the discomforts he had endured.

The boat was now at the pier, and after the usual casting and catching of ropes, hauling of hawsers, backing and starting, hoarse orders and loud cursing, and the final hissing of the escaping steam, she was at length made fast to the wharf, and the gang-plank was drawn ashore. Mr. Hamilton landed among the first of the passengers, and was conducted by Morton to where the Ellertons' carriage was waiting for them, its handsome pair of gray horses with fashionably mutilated tails, and brass-harnesses mounted with leather, pawing the ground in their impatience at being kept waiting in the cold morning air.

Mr. Hamilton entered the coupé, closely followed by Morton, and while the two gentlemen were being rapidly driven toward the Ellertons' cottage, Morton hastily acquainted his guardian with all that had occurred since they had last met.

Curiously enough, Morton, who did not doubt that his own explanation of his birth was the correct one, refrained from asking Mr. Hamilton as to the truth of his surmises, but merely devoted himself to a brief resumé of the facts explaining the existing state of affairs. In this way the clergyman managed to get a very clear idea both of the separation of the husband and wife and what had led to it, as well as the birth of the black child and the trouble it had caused.

That Mr. Hamilton was amazed and horrified by Morton's recital, it is needless to say. The possibility of what had happened had never occurred to him, and now, when regrets were useless, he bitterly repented the course he had pursued. What had happened he regarded as the outgrowth of the deceit to which he had lent himself, and he was gloomily moralizing how deceit always leads to deceit and ends in misfortune, when the carriage drew up before the Ellertons' door.

As they entered the house, Mr. Ellerton met

them, and after the usual civilities had been exchanged, he led Mr. Hamilton into the dining-room where breakfast was awaiting them, and insisted that he should partake of some refreshment before anything was said upon the subject which had necessitated his presence.

Mr. Hamilton was of an old Virginian family, and his courtly manners and dignified bearing made a most favorable impression upon Mr. Ellerton, who became more and more pleased with his guest. When breakfast was over, they talked animatedly of all sorts of irrelevant things. Morton could hardly conceal his impatience; and he was upon the point of reminding them of the importance of the matter before them, when Doctor Washburn's arrival put an end to their conversation. Mr. Ellerton then ushered his guests into the library, having so improved his opportunities during his conversation with the clergyman as to convince himself that he could rely upon that gentleman's support in dissuading Morton from his self-imposed banishment.

"Mr. Hamilton," said the doctor, when the library had been closed so as to guard against the possibility of interruption, "Mr. Hamilton will be able to set our minds at rest at once. Mr. Morton has acquainted you with the facts, I believe," said he, addressing himself to the

clergyman, "and we rely upon you to explain this strange freak of nature."

"I am quite ready to offer you any explanation that lies in my power," said Mr. Hamilton, formally. "Indeed it seems to me that further concealment of Mr. Morton's parentage ceases to be wise."

"I am glad to find that you are of our opinion," said the doctor, dryly, "though I fancy that we have arrived at a correct diagnosis of the case and shall only require you to confirm it. Mr. Morton's child is black, as he has doubtless informed you, and we account for this by assuming that Mr. Morton himself was the white child of negro parents. We assume that one of his ancestors, more or less remote, was white, and that Mr. Morton has inherited his color from this ancestor and is white too, while his child, in its turn, instead of resembling its parents, who are white, inherits from some black ancestor, and is black."

"Your diagnosis, as you call it, Doctor," said Mr. Hamilton, with a slight smile, "like most of our human reason, is wrong. Or, at best, it is a jumble of truth and falsehood. Mr. Morton's father and mother are both black, and so far you are correct in what you say; but, on the other hand, the genealogy of both Morton's parents is peculiarly well known for African families, and in

no instance is there a case known of intermarriage with a white."

"Nevertheless," said Doctor Washburn, "what you say does not disprove that Mr. Morton has had a white ancestor. You cannot go back far enough to be sure that he never did."

"That is true," replied the clergyman; "but why need we assume that he did have such a white ancestor, when we can account for the variation in a more satisfactory way? Mr. Morton's mother's family is one of those peculiar ones of pure African blood, in which white children, called Albinos, are often born. You may look incredulous, gentlemen, but nevertheless what I assert is a fact well known in natural history. I reiterate, that there are some African families of pure blood, in which white children are born in nearly every generation. Mr. Morton's mother's family happens to be one of these, and Mr. Morton himself happens to be one of these anomalous white children. When Mr. Morton was born," continued he, seeing that his listeners looked at each other somewhat incredulously, "I investigated the literature of the subject, and the results of my study are still fresh in my memory. Thomas Jefferson, in his Notes on Virginia, mentions seven instances in which a white child was born of negro parents. Three or four of these cases, he says, came under his personal observation, and he

describes them at considerable length, though quaintly enough, under the head of 'Indigenous Animals.' Among other writers, I can recall a certain Doctor Prichard, who mentions the case of a negro man who was the father of a white child by a black mother. This negro, when questioned in regard to the color of his child, said that his own father was white, although born of black parents in a district of the country where white men were never seen. I can assure you, gentlemen, that what I say is well authenticated, and I can refer you to the authorities if you care to prove the truth of what I say."

"But," said the doctor, who had nothing to urge against this catalogue of cases, which had a medical sound very convincing to his professional mind, "you are speaking of Albinos, and Albinos are described as having various characteristic peculiarities, such as a white color untinged with red, curled hair like that of the negro, excepting that it is white, and red eyes particularly sensitive to light; whereas Mr. Morton is a typical Caucasian, possessed of none of these peculiarities, and generally considered an unusually handsome specimen of the race."

"Very true," replied the clergyman; "but when we see the general plan of nature so curiously modified by the hand of God as to allow colored parents to give birth to white children, surely it

is not difficult to believe that the same Omnipotent Power can create a modified Albino, differing from the usual attributes of his class, especially when we see that the modified albinism occurs in many species of animals."

The doctor was about to reply, when Morton interrupted this discussion by saying, —

"Then it is true that my parents are negroes?"

"Yes, my dear boy," replied Mr. Hamilton; "both your parents are negroes, and your grandparents were slaves. But if you are of black blood, it is of the best; on the father's side you are of royal descent. Your great-grandfather was a king, who was taken by slave-traders and sold to an American planter. It is partly due to these family traditions, and the accounts given by this planter, whose son is a friend of mine, that I am enabled to be so positive in regard to your genealogy. But although your parents are black, they are parents of whom any son might justly be proud. Your father is one of the best educated and most upright men I have ever met. They did their duty to you, as they understood it, fearlessly and nobly, for it was a great sacrifice for them to part with their child."


"Do not let us forget the main object of our conference, in a side-issue," said the doctor, when Mr. Hamilton paused. "The question before us now is not so much why the child is black, as it

is what shall we do with it, since it is black? I confess that my interest, as a student of nature, has made me forgetful of my duty to my patient. With your permission, gentlemen," continued he, speaking to Mr. Ellerton and Morton, "I will explain our decision to Mr. Hamilton, and he can give us the benefit of his advice."

Morton and Mr. Ellerton signified their acquiescence in the doctor's proposal, and the latter forthwith addressed himself to the clergyman, and explained what has already been spoken of. When Doctor Washburn concluded, the clergyman, who had listened attentively, replied:—

"Under the circumstances, I do not feel justified in offering objections to your plan, though there are some elements in it which I consider questionable, and I would suggest one or two slight modifications. Of course, I cannot be expected to approve of deception, but that is a matter for you to decide, not for me. It is a question in my mind whether it is right for you to take away the child without its mother's knowledge and consent; but as I do not know Mrs. Morton, and am unable to judge whether she is well enough to bear the worry and grief a full disclosure of the facts would necessarily cause, I must leave this matter, also, to your better judgment. But," said he, addressing himself to Morton, "I can make a suggestion which will, in a large measure, obviate

this latter difficulty, and which will render it unnecessary for you to sacrifice yourself as you propose. The responsibility of paternity is an awful one:—to think that you have in your charge a little soul of God's giving, which you must prepare for His life everlasting. It is your duty, my dear Morton, to consider how you can best accomplish this sacred obligation, and it seems to me that the proper persons to take charge of the child are your father and mother; they would gladly take their little grandchild to them, and in this way it will be sure of receiving the most loving care. I seriously doubt if you can conquer your natural repugnance to your little black child sufficiently to love it half so well, or to care for it half so tenderly, as its grandparents will do. The interests of the child are manifestly in favor of this change. Then, too, this separation of the husband from the wife demands it, for if you take your child away yourself, the separation must continue; and such a separation is a sin against Divine law which ought to be righted at any cost. Your highest duty is to stay here until a reconciliation is accomplished. Now, if you will provide for the child a suitable nurse, and place it in her charge, I will take them both to Washington with me, and will assume all the responsibility of them until they are safely handed over to the baby's grandmother."



Mr. Ellerton and Morton both listened attentively to the clergyman's speech, the former seeing that the one great obstacle in the way of his daughter's happiness would be removed if Morton would adopt the suggestion it contained, while the latter saw that Mr. Hamilton's offer would furnish him opportunity for reconciliation with his wife, although his intention of taking charge of his child himself still remained unshaken; for, as will have been perceived, Morton had a large share of that intellectual quality, which is called determination in men and obstinacy in women.

As the clergyman concluded, Mr. Ellerton rose impulsively from his chair, and grasping him warmly by the hand, said, with great approval:—

“A most excellent suggestion! My son-in-law must see at a glance that this will be the best thing for all concerned. We cannot thank you sufficiently for this admirable idea.”

“Yes,” said Morton, thoughtfully, “it is a kind suggestion, and will relieve me of my greatest difficulty; for instead of taking the child away from Newport myself, I will place her under your charge, and send her to her grandparents. But this arrangement shall be temporary. I adopt it only that I may be enabled to make an effort towards a reconciliation with my wife. After I have seen Mrs. Morton, I shall come on to Washington, and take charge of my child myself, for

this I consider my duty. But your suggestion frees me from my greatest difficulty, Mr. Hamilton," continued he, turning to the clergyman. "If I had gone away from Newport without seeing my wife first, she would never have forgiven my seeming heartlessness, and I on the other hand could not have explained to her my reasons for going away. As it is, a life in exile will be hard enough, without the added burden of the knowledge that my wife has not forgiven the past. I thank you sincerely for your offer and accept it most gratefully."

Morton spoke decidedly, and his listeners all felt that any attempt to dissuade him from his resolution would be without avail; and as if by mutual consent, all three forbore from urging the matter further, at least for the present. For a few moments nothing was said, and then the doctor, taking the initiative, resumed:—

"Then our original plan is to be acted upon, is it?"

"Yes," replied Morton.

"And you consent to pledge me your word of honor, that you will agree to every detail I may consider necessary for the removal of this child and the concealment of her parentage; you will promise not to interfere, but to take everything which may happen as a matter of course?"

"Yes," said Morton, "I promise."

"And will both of you, gentlemen, make the same promise?"

Mr. Ellerton graciously assented, but the clergyman, with the caution which became his calling, paused to enquire:—

"Am I expected to practise any deception?"

"No," replied the doctor, smiling slightly.

"Then I, too, will give you my promise," said Mr. Hamilton.

"And now," said the doctor, "let us decide upon the time and place. Everything else I shall arrange myself."


After some deliberation, it was agreed upon that the child should be taken away at eight o'clock that very night, an hour which would allow ample time for Mr. Hamilton to catch the night-boat for New York, by which means he would reach Washington the following day.

When at length all was finally settled to the doctor's satisfaction, Morton took Mr. Ellerton aside and a short whispered conversation ensued, after which they withdrew into Mr. Ellerton's private study, a small room leading out of the library. The doctor and the clergyman found themselves alone together,—Science and Religion, as it were, abandoned for the moment by Pride and Prejudice.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN Mr. Ellerton and Morton returned to the library, the former cleared his throat and asked Doctor Washburn with great formality that Mr. Hamilton might be permitted to see Mrs. Morton before his departure for Washington. Morton had prevailed upon him to give his consent to this, with the greatest difficulty ; but he had finally succumbed to Morton's arguments, and when he found that no objection was made by Doctor Washburn, he invited Mr. Hamilton to remain and see his daughter.

It was now the greatest desire of Morton's life that he might be reconciled to his wife before he left the country. Once in exile, he felt he should never see Ellen again. He hoped that Mr. Hamilton's influence might induce her to see him, and this had been his motive for bringing the interview about. This having been finally agreed upon, the conference broke up, and Mr. Ellerton conducted the clergyman into the parlor, proposing, as he expressed it, "to have the honor of presenting Mr. Hamilton to Mrs. Ellerton," in order that Mrs. Ellerton might in turn introduce him to the young mother.



That evening, at the preconcerted hour, a large carriage might have been seen standing in a side street near Bellevue Avenue. In it were Mr. Hamilton, and the young colored woman who had been engaged as nurse for the child. At some distance from the carriage, pacing up and down the street, was Morton, in far too excited a state of mind to admit of repose. The night was exceedingly dark, and Morton's impatience had brought them out so early that they had been waiting nearly half an hour, when at length they heard the sound of approaching wheels, and the rythmical noise of horse's hoofs striking on the hard road. The sound came nearer and nearer, until at length the doctor's buggy appeared through the gloom of the night and stopped at some distance from the carriage.

Morton hurried forward as the doctor dismounted from his buggy, and saw that the physician had in his arms a bundle, which he carried with that ostentatious carelessness which always makes us wonder whether medical gentlemen take babies roughly because they wish to shock our prejudices, or whether it is because they know how much rough handling these little creatures can bear with impunity.

Morton held out his arms, and the doctor bunched the bundle into them (no other word expresses his action), with the prosaic injunction :

"Be careful of its head," — a remark admirably calculated to dispel any sentiment which the circumstances might have aroused.

It was the first time Morton had ever held so young a child ; add to this, the child was deformed and it was his own, and it was with an indescribable emotion that he took in his arms that little black child who seemed destined to cast an ever-increasing shadow, blacker than itself, over its father's life. Morton carried his burden to the carriage, where he delivered it to the young colored woman, who received it with all the coddling, endearments, and demonstrations of affection, which women are wont to lavish upon unconscious children.

For a moment Morton looked gloomily on. Then silently pressing the clergyman's hand, he signalled to the coachman that all was ready, and the carriage drove off with the little black child it was carrying from its parents and its home. The first move in the doctor's plan was completed.

Our story takes us back to the young mother, who, in the meantime, all unconscious of the events that were happening about her, had worried herself almost into a fever with wondering why her husband had not come to her. Never had she prized her husband's love so highly, as when it was lost to her. She wondered how she ever could have accepted his chivalrous devotion and

worshipping love so lightly as she had, and during the long months of her estrangement from Morton, the thought that the baby's birth would unite her to him again had sustained her through all her troubles. But when the baby was two days old, and still Morton had not come, she was beginning to despair of ever seeing him again. Not knowing that he was in the house, she fancied that he was too proud to come until she should summon him.

This was the state of things when Mr. Hamilton's visit was announced, and although the announcement took Ellen greatly by surprise, she received him kindly for Morton's sake, a condescension for which she was largely repaid; for in the course of the conversation that followed, the clergyman, who was unacquainted with the true state of affairs between the young people, let out, not only that Morton had been in the house since the night of the baby's birth, but also that he was very anxious for an interview with his wife, although as yet he had not been allowed to visit the sick-room.

This revelation had the effect of cheering Ellen to such an extent that she listened meekly to the clergyman's little sermon on wifely duty, and the wickedness of a disagreement between a husband and wife, secretly congratulating herself that all her troubles were now past, and that in a day or two, at the most, Morton and she would be happier

than ever after their long estrangement. So mildly, in fact, did she listen to the little sermon he read her, that Mr. Hamilton, who had undertaken the task of mediator between the husband and wife without much hope of success, was charmed by her sweetness and humility; and he left the room marvelling to himself on the softening influence of maternity, and arguing the best possible results from such unexpected meekness.

On the morning following the removal of the child, Mr. Ellerton and Morton were sitting at breakfast together, when the doctor entered the dining-room, looking so anxious and thoughtful that both hastened to enquire what had happened.

"Everything is all right," replied the doctor. "Mrs. Morton is doing well, but she is so anxious and wrought up by the baby's illness, that I have told her that Mr. Morton will see her in the course of an hour."

"What!" exclaimed both gentlemen together.

"I have just broken it to Mrs. Morton," explained Doctor Washburn, deliberately, "that her child is dying, and she was so much excited, that I thought it best to say that Mr. Morton would see her at once."

"Why was not I consulted in this matter?" asked Mr. Ellerton; angrily. "I am not at all sure that I am willing to allow Mr. Morton to see my daughter, unless he consents to renounce his

idea of expatriating himself. Then, too, I do not understand this jargon about the baby's dying. The last we knew of it, it was perfectly well. Pray explain yourself, Doctor Washburn, if you can explain this extraordinary conduct."

"Mr. Ellerton," replied Doctor Washburn, firmly, "you have given me your promise that you will consent to any detail that I may consider necessary for the removal and concealment of this black child. It was precisely because I feared some such disagreement as this when the time came to act, that I demanded this promise. Part of my work is done, and the cause of all the trouble is now on its way to Washington. But much still remains to be done, before we can be sure that no one shall learn our secret. The time for boldness has now come, and I call upon both Mr. Morton and you to fulfil *your* part of the bargain."

"Pray pardon me, Doctor Washburn," said Mr. Ellerton. "You are quite right; I did not understand that this was part of our conspiracy, or perhaps I should more correctly say, collusion. I have given you my word of honor, and I believe you know that an Ellerton was never known to break his word. What do you require of me?"

"Simply that you express no surprise at whatever may happen. What I have done, I believe to be absolutely necessary, however revolting it may

seem to you. I must again urge both of you to be careful, lest in an unguarded moment you may betray everything. I have told every one that the baby is dying: that its death is only a question of hours. Before I leave the house its death will be announced. In the meantime I desire Mr. Morton to go up to his wife, as we shall require his assistance when the final announcement is made."

"I fear that I have given my promise too rashly," said Mr. Ellerton, who saw from the doctor's serious manner that more was meant than the words were intended to convey. "But once given it is inviolable."

"We ought to thank Doctor Washburn for all he has done," broke in Morton. "For my part, I will do all in my power to forward our common interests. But I hope, Doctor Washburn, that you will manage to shield Mrs. Morton from any unnecessary pain."

"Trust me, Mr. Morton," said the doctor, reassuringly. "I am a pretty good judge of human nature, if I do say it myself; and I have seen enough of Mrs. Morton to assure you, that her joy at being reconciled to you will more than counterbalance the pain she will feel at the loss of a baby whom she has never seen. The sooner you go up stairs, the sooner we can get to work. Remember, above all things, show no surprise at anything that may happen."


"I will do my best," said Morton. Then, with a questioning glance at his father-in-law, he left the room and went slowly up the stairs, until he came to the door of Ellen's chamber. Here he paused to still the throbbings of his heart, for that important but unruly organ was beating with an intensity which shook his whole frame, and for a moment it seemed as if there were in his breast a conflict between fear and hope, which must suffocate him ere the battle was decided.

At last, summoning up all his resolution, he stepped forward and gently pushed the door, which was already slightly ajar. The door swung noiselessly upon its hinges. Morton looked into the sick-room. He saw Ellen, lying on the bed. How beautiful, he thought; but alas! how fragile. How near he had been to losing her forever! Ellen did not see him at first, as he stood there spellbound; but soon, by that marvellous consciousness, which gives us warning of another's presence, although without actual seeing or hearing, when we think ourselves alone, she turned her head languidly toward the door, and saw her husband. At the sight of Morton she started, and the warm blood flooded to her face, as with a little cry she put out her arms to him. Morton reverently knelt down by the side of the bed, and all the misery of the past was forgotten in the sacred happiness of the present.

CHAPTER XXV.

IT is one of the natural instincts of all human beings, no matter how cold and unsympathetic they may be, to be considerate of lovers; to help them in that path which is never too smooth, and to defer to their mutual desire to be alone together, "the world forgetting and by the world forgot." Whether this is because the sight of such undisguised happiness in others recalls to each one of us the remembrance of some similar scene in our own lives, in which we ourselves were the chief actors; or whether it is because human nature is sceptical, and growing experience has taught us, that in no one of our emotional tendencies is that wise old maxim, "Make hay while the sun shines," so applicable and so prophetic, as when applied to making love,—I cannot say. But whatever may have been the cause of that delicacy which impelled us to bring the last chapter to such a precipitous close, the requirements of the story now compel us to break in upon the lovers.

A few moments had passed. Morton had drawn a chair close to the side of the bed, and was now sitting there. One of his sinewy hands, which looked so suggestively strong and brown, in con-



trast to the dainty little white one, was gently caressing the pale, thin fingers which were lying languidly on the snowy sheet.

All recollection of past disagreements seemed to have vanished in the actual contact of the present, and certainly we cannot blame Morton very severely for inconsistency, when we remember that he was a man, and that some twenty pounds of hot blood were whirling through his veins and arteries, tempting him to all manner of follies and masculine weaknesses. But, judging from Morton's face, complete reconciliation had not brought to him unclouded happiness. Indeed, he looked sadder and more thoughtful than before; for present happiness was foreshadowed by the impending calamity of separation, which loomed up before him, a huge barrier to self-forgetfulness and to unrestrained demonstration of affection.

The black face of his child, set off by the ivory background of its infant unconsciousness, was ever before him, and reminded him of the ordeal of that final separation yet to come. He shuddered to think of the pain that he should feel when the time arrived for him to tear himself from his wife, restored to him only that he must lose her, and dearer to him now than ever before; and his pain was enhanced by the knowledge that the separation which would bring misery to him, must bring it also to her whose happiness was dearer to him than his own.

The promise that Mr. Ellerton had extorted from him, in his ignorance of Ellen's feelings, recurred to his mind with startling distinctness, and he was not slow in realizing how great an influence that hasty, unguarded promise must exert over his future life.

Morton's position was one of the greatest perplexity; he did not know what to do, or what to say. Like the Spartan boy, who concealed the fox beneath his cloak, his secret was consuming him, and yet he must not not speak. He became more and more absorbed in his own thoughts, until at length Ellen, who had been babbling on in happy unconsciousness of all that was passing through his mind, noticed his abstracted and pre-occupied manner. She passed her hand gently over his brow, and said, caressingly:—

“Do not think of the past, dear, except as a bitter lesson. I shall make no more protestations. You shall see for yourself what I am going to be.” Then, seeing the expression of pain still in her husband's face, she continued, softly: “Do you know, dear, that in having you back again, I have forgotton all about our little baby?” At this unconscious speech Morton was fairly overcome, and not knowing what to do, he involuntarily did the wisest thing he could have done under the circumstances, for he buried his face in his hands, and gave vent to his pent-up feelings in a passionate burst of tears.

"Do you feel it so much, dear?" said Ellen, smoothing his hair, and trying to comfort him. "I know all about it, too. Doctor Washburn has told me that she cannot live, but I am so happy at having you back again, that I cannot think of our little girl. I lose her, but I find you at the same time; and what I find is so immeasurably dearer than what I lose! Besides, do you know, I have never seen the baby."

"It is not the child!" cried Morton. "It's you, it's you, my darling. It's the thought" — Morton stopped. He must not disclose the real source of the grief that seemed to suffocate him. "My darling," he continued, with more calmness, "it's because you seem so pale and ill."

"Never mind me," said Ellen, affectionately. "Doctor Washburn says that I shall be well soon. All I needed was you; now that I have got you back again, I shall soon get well."

At this moment Doctor Washburn luckily entered the room. I say luckily, because Morton was so impetuous where his love was concerned, that if he had been left alone with his wife much longer, he would probably have acquainted her with all the facts which he had been at such pains to conceal.

But the timely entrance of Doctor Washburn spared Morton from a premature avowal of his scheme of self-banishment. The doctor was

very grave. He drew a chair up to the bedside, and seating himself, cast a warning look at Morton.

"Mrs. Morton," said he, very quietly, "I bring sad news. Will you try to listen calmly to what I have to tell you?"

"O Doctor!" exclaimed Ellen, passionately, "my baby is dead!"

"Yes," replied the doctor, frowning heavily at Morton, who seemed about to speak. Ellen buried her face in the pillows and began to weep.

Doctor Washburn held up one finger at Morton, and then continued:—

"Yes, Mrs. Morton; her illness, as I told you, was the beginning of the end. The end has come. It is all for the best. With her deformity, your little child could only have brought unhappiness upon you all if she had lived."

"Was she deformed?" asked Ellen, with an expression of curiosity, horror, and awe; and for a moment her interest overcame her grief. "Is that why I have not been allowed to see her?" she asked.

"Yes," replied the doctor; "she was so deformed that I feared to allow you to see her. It is a great mercy that she has not lived."

"But I must see her once," said Ellen, pleadingly; "can't I, only for a moment?"

"Certainly you can," said the doctor, with another fearful frown at Morton, who was listening in amazement to this conversation, and was beginning to fear that Doctor Washburn had lost his reason. "Certainly you can see her; but you must not touch her, and you must try not to excite yourself needlessly. I will tell the nurse to bring her in."

So saying, Doctor Washburn left the room. He was secretly pleased that Ellen had taken the matter so calmly. He prided himself on his knowledge of human nature in general, and woman nature in particular, and it had always been one of his pet theories that young mothers never instinctively love their children, but learn to do so gradually, in the same way that children learn to see and speak; in short, the theory of maternal instinct was another of those charmingly pretty ideas in which the doctor did not believe. He had argued to himself that Ellen could not care much for the child she had never seen, and that, even if she did care, the loss of it would be outweighed by a reconciliation with her husband. It was for this reason that he had kept the reconciliation for this very emergency. The result proved that his judgment was even more correct than he had allowed himself to expect, and he withdrew from the room, congratulating himself upon the soundness of his

reasoning and the favorable completion of what he considered his necessary deception.

A minute had hardly elapsed before the doctor returned, reiterating his caution that Mrs. Morton should not give way to her feelings; Mrs. Mott followed him, carrying the baby's basket in her arms, so carefully covered with its embroidered blanket as to completely veil its occupant from the view.

Mrs. Mott laid the basket gently on a chair which Doctor Washburn had arranged for its reception. Then, with a guilty look, she hurried from the room, evidently dreading the impending scene.

For a moment a deep silence — the silence of death — pervaded the darkened chamber, and Morton gazed sternly at the doctor, awaiting his explanation of this heartless masquerade. But the doctor returned his gaze unflinchingly; then, with a gesture of admonition, he bent down and drew aside the blanket.

Morton mechanically followed the doctor's action with his eyes, and he shuddered and a low cry of horror escaped him as his glance fell upon the upturned face of a white child, whose dead form was nestling in what had been the black child's pillows.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER the substitution had been effected, Doctor Washburn knew that he could rely upon the promises which both Mr. Ellerton and Morton had given him; and when once the child's death was announced to the Ellertons' narrow world, who of their sympathizing friends — those friends who would so surely demand to see the child — would ever recognize in the little dead form which so complacently occupied the aristocratic cradle up stairs, a neglected creature who had been carelessly left upon a door-step the previous night, to claim the pity and protection of whomsoever might be attracted by its plaintive cries? Who could surely say, indeed, that this little child of shame, carried to a neighboring police-station by a laborer who had chanced to find it crying in the crisp cold of the autumn morning, had not in its veins that rich, blue blood which Mr. Ellerton so unduly prized? Take the child of the lowest criminals, or the offspring of the most squalid mendicants, — dress him in costly clothes and lay him in the same bed with the descendant of a line of kings, and if it so be that the children are but two days old, Nature

defies the wisest of us to declare which was born in purple and which in rags. Thus Doctor Washburn reasoned, and it was that he might avoid the slightest possibility of detection that he had introduced the pathetic dumb-show into the drama. By the aid of its presence, everything could be arranged in the usual manner. There would be no need of further secrecy, no necessity of additional confidants.

The few days which followed slowly dragged themselves away, and Morton, unhappy at the ever-present consciousness of the deceit he was forced to practise, saw the hour of his departure draw near with a feeling of positive relief. He was sailing under false colors, he thought—not under his own black flag; and his mind, harrowed by conflicting emotions, welcomed activity, even though it should separate him from the wife he loved. But he felt that the separation could not be forever, as he firmly believed that Ellen would insist upon accompanying him into his exile when she recognized its necessity; and sustained by this belief he had left Newport, promising to return in a few weeks, at the latest.

One afternoon, rather less than a week after Morton's departure, a carriage drove up to the Ellertons' door and Morton alighted. It was much sooner than he had expected to return, and Mr. Ellerton, who had come forward to meet

his visitor, was betrayed into expressing the minimum amount of well-bred surprise when he recognized his son-in-law in the hall. But suppressing any trifling expression of feeling that he might have been guilty of showing, he extended his hand to Morton.

"I am glad to see you," said he, almost questioningly; "but isn't your return rather unexpected?"

"Yes," replied Morton. "I had a telegram from Washington, this morning, and decided to come down the moment I received it."

"Indeed," remarked Mr. Ellerton. "May I venture to inquire the nature of its contents?"

"The child has died," answered Morton, abruptly. "She never recovered from the trouble Doctor Washburn spoke of, but gradually failed, although everything was done for her. I may go up to see Ellen, I suppose?"

But before Mr. Ellerton could reply, Morton had abruptly left him, and was hurrying up the stairs, too impatient to await his father-in-law's elaborate permission.

Ellen, who had found the period of Morton's absence passing with leaden feet, had devoted this particular afternoon to examining the contents of a small carved Tyrolean box, which was lying on the bed beside her. One by one she had slowly read the few letters she had received from Morton

in the days gone by, and piece by piece she had examined the rosebuds and faded flowers, each of which was rich in some sacred memory, and which, by recalling some past scene, was a precious possession. At last all the contents of the box had been removed and examined, except a single cluster of edelweiss. This she had taken from its resting-place, and was silently contemplating, when Morton burst into the room, too impatient to await her answer to his gentle tap, which, indeed, she in her reverie had not heard.

Morton interpreted the whole scene at a glance. The sight of the edelweiss recalled the past, and old memories flooded across his mind with an overwhelming rush, — with a bound he was at the bed-side, and Ellen and Morton were again united.

In the days which followed, Morton acquainted Ellen with the history of the past and both learned to regard what had happened as retribution for their various failings. Children's love they never knew, but their lives were nevertheless complete in the perfection of their mutual affection.

THE END.



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